WHO WILL BE MASTER

EUROPE OR AMERICA?

Johnny Stix
1929

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BY LUCIEN ROMIER

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER ONE

THE ISSUE AT STAKE

I. UNIVERSAL INFLUENCES AND NATIONAL TRAITS

All of us, whether great or small, whether we live splendidly in a great city or humbly in some village, are accustomed to reasoning about the universe by relating it all to our own immediate lives. We all tend to place ourselves squarely in the center of things, in order to understand, appraise, use and dominate them, as if we could be at will now master of all, and now impassive spectator. Each of us, in short, deems his house, his shop, his office, his trade, his country, more important than all the rest of the world.

What is there surprising in this? And who would possibly venture to change such an innate tendency of the human consciousness?

No matter what may be discovered, no matter

what may come about, human affairs will always be determined principally by the selfish interests of individuals or groups. In the realm of pure ideas, as in that of practical affairs, we should be guilty of the sheerest stupidity if we pretended to ignore those insuperable limitations which reflect eternally the ambitions and the prejudices of particular egoisms.

However we must observe that as the advance of transportation brings territories and populations closer together, gives them common ideas, sets their traditions and their passions in harmony or conflict with each other, uniting them in a common material development which overruns local peculiarities and transforms the special character of races, in short, as the world becomes more and more unified we must adjust our minds to a far broader view of human solidarity.

Formerly, the individual depended for his livelihood on the equilibrium within a tribe or a parish. Later, he became dependent upon the fortunes of a shire, a province, a duchy, a republic, a "colony." And finally, he had to submit (and still submits) to the laws of a whole country, more or less power-

ful, and more or less complex, for his needs and his duties.

But to-day the solidarity of mankind is based upon a far-flung plan which exceeds everything known in the past. Our possessions and our very lives may at any moment be vitally injured by events whose cause originates ten thousand miles away in a part of the world utterly unknown to us. A tornado or a drought destroys the crops of the Argentine, of Cuba, or of Malaysia—and our supply of bread dwindles, our provisions of rice and sugar grow meager. It needs but a fire or adverse conditions in the forest regions of Canada, Norway, and Finland for our stocks of paper to become dear and the diffusion of opinion or knowledge to suffer restriction. It needs but a depression of trade in New York for unemployment to appear in Lyons or Milan. Or let some new fad spread to our homes, or some European vice reach a far-off Polynesian island, and families fall apart, or whole races die off. Or if by some treaty or some chance a certain people be given oil-fields, coal, copper, cotton, then behold: this people lays down the law not only for her neighbors, but also for nations at the antipodes of the world. It needs only a war in South Africa

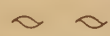
or in the Pacific for the peace of Europe to be menaced. . . .

We must then, first as a precautionary measure, and second, and more importantly, as a means of directing our moral endeavors as well as our practical enterprises, hold ourselves henceforth to reasoning about the universal application of things.

Besides, it is only through taking up these more universal considerations that we may be able to judge true values, distinguish between useful and vain effort, between our veritable sufferings and our trivial quarrels. It is only thus that the traveler who has gone from Paris to Cadiz, or from Vera Cruz to Chicago, may discover on his return home a relationship between the people and things around him which he had never hitherto suspected.

For we live now in a close community of interests with the whole world, concerned, perforce, in keeping up a harmony and balance throughout. Every man in active life, every man whose thoughts may influence in some way the actions of others must from now on bear in mind those great laws and those great facts that determine or modify the universal equilibrium, which is here

almost stable, and there threatened with rupture, and elsewhere still non-existent.



However, certain national or social traits resist the process of "universalization," and with what vigor! The ideas, the instruments, and the customs of humanity tend to become at once universal and uniform, but each nation, each group, tries to bend them to its own purpose.

Undoubtedly, nationalism like everything else grows old, changes shape and renews itself. It is no longer at the present time what it was in the French Revolution or in the days of the *Risorgimento* in Italy; a movement of liberation and independence. It suggests rather to-day the tendency to imitate and to compete.

And as for the instincts of these national temperaments—they do not appear to have aged, nor to have changed at all.

The great war, upon an enormous scale, has accelerated the tendency, in human beings, toward wearing the same hats, using the same machines and asking for the same goods. It has not equalized them, nor made them more conciliatory. Once the ordeal was over the really outstanding fact,—and

how disconcerting!—was the force of that instinct which drove all men back to their habits of thinking, calculating and acting *nationally*. After the last shot was fired, there was found unaltered and still opposed, in spite of all the exhortations to the contrary, the temperament and the politics of the English, the French, the Americans, the Italians, etc. There was no question of a premeditated reaction, since the common feeling that there was an alliance of some kind survived its actual practice by a long period.

Regionalism has reappeared everywhere in the most diverse forms, social, economic, political, wherever it has been denied. To-day as before the war profound differences prevail between continental syndicalism and British trade-unionism, between the social-democratic parties and the labor parties. Essentially Russian, the communism of Moscow is strong within but weak and immediately deformed as soon as it attempts to function outside of its orbit. Fascism harks back in all its aspects to the very fiber of Italian history. Spain has given to her old custom of *pronunciamentos* an air of youth. France, eternally the same, manages to combine, paradoxically enough, her taste for abstract and

negative discussions with a positive effort toward material readjustment. And as for Germany, she will show herself as always, methodical and brutal, in failure as in prosperity, in humiliation as in pride.

We see the autonomous instincts of national groups even in their various methods of calculating their interests. If there is any domain in which economists believe that they have established the working of absolute, "scientific" laws it is in that of money and credit. Yet, although all of the European States emerged from the war ruined, there are not two among them whose monetary evolution would present a similar curve.

The revalorization of the pound sterling does great honor to the financiers of London; it was achieved and has been maintained, in the face of all logic, thanks to the peculiar composition of the English people. As to France, her monetary history is the exact mirror of her character. . . .

Examining the situation of mankind to-day, we arrive then, at two facts which at first seem opposed to each other: the universality of material influences, and the persistence of national, or racial, traits. Such opposition would cause a conflict, and

consequently the disappearance of one or the other in the long run, if both were facts which functioned on the same plane. But they are not. In reality, the temperament of each nation will cause her now and then to seize upon some element, great or small, of these universal forces; now using them to her own ends, now submitting to them, according to the aggressiveness or passivity of her rôle.

In other words, humanity is not blindly drawn into an evolution which she can only submit to. There is always occasion to fight for the upper hand, and whether man is to have it depends upon the qualities which are preserved or nourished in him.

But the conditions and the very basis of this mastery have changed. Men are no longer divided or grouped into the same categories as formerly; virtually their whole existence is imperiously ruled by new necessities; and these necessities involve, so far as the immediate ends of civilization are concerned, exigencies of a nature and direction which are utterly new.

It is vain to dream of mastery for those who lose their native qualities and acquire no superior ones.

Vain also for those who do not realize that the world will not acknowledge a master unless this master responds to her urgent needs.

II. THE PHENOMENA OF MASS CIVILIZATION

Human societies in their evolution are becoming aware more and more of the preponderance of the masses. The older societies were hierarchies. Present day societies are moving away from the established forms toward a type in which the inequalities of social levels disappear, all men being considered as cogwheels in a vast machine which cannot function without each and every one of its parts; there remains thus only an organic interdependence of mutual service. This is what is meant by the common saying that all people are becoming "equal." In this sense the engineer and the manual laborer are indispensable to each other as the farmer is indispensable to the merchant, and so, to all practical purposes, they are *equal*. The social principle of authority gives way to the more immediate notion of utility: each one feels himself the equal of others whenever he has need of them and they have need of him; he feels himself their superior when he doesn't need them and they need him. The

economic balancing through supply and demand merges with a social balancing.

But this balance does not depend solely upon the relation of one individual to another. With the spread of specialization in labor, in knowledge and even in thought, each individual is aligned with a group possessing similar interests. These groups form economic units or masses, whose size varies from city to continent, from continent to the world. Around the manufacture of Roquefort cheese is ranged an economic mass which extends from the shepherds of Causses or of Corsica to the commission houses of New York; just as around the production and sale of petroleum another economic mass has sprung up whose sway is felt in America, in Europe, in Asia. . . . It is within the organization of these masses and in their relations with each other, that the new balance of society finds its basis.

The phenomena of mass-life is far more complex and follows a much more rigorous and unswerving development than one would imagine at first glance.*

* M. Romier's usage of the word *masse* must not be confused with the colloquial English sense of "masses" as "the

It involves not only an alignment of interests, and a resultant solidarity, it involves also the circumstances of growth and multiplication. That is to say, assembled before new sources of wealth, or gathered together by the exploitation of new processes, new currents of traffic, men have been drawn, first by the lure of gain, then by fear of competition, to form in solid ranks: the benefits of this solidarity have not only called together men from all walks of life but also caused the birth of

people," or even "the common people." It is used rather in the primary and precise meaning of the term: a coherent body, a dense aggregation, a *bloc*.

Moreover, in view of the modern economic theory which the author adheres to, and which advances the idea of "dynamic wealth" (productivity), as against "static" or divisible wealth, all people are related to each other by their common labor, rather than divided against each other into warring "classes." Thus the owners of coal mines and the miners are linked together in a common economic *mass* or unit. The welfare of both may suffer through the competition of massed petroleum interests, including its laborers and capitalists. And as the author unfolds his stimulating theories it will be seen that there are no longer any "proletarians" in the old Marxian sense; that capitalist and laborer alike may be equally enslaved by the machinery of economic life; that to prosper both must keep eternally at the vital cycle of production, for which "partition" or stoppage is fatal.—Tr.

numberless others who would never have been born. Thus in a hundred years the population of the world has doubled, that of Europe has tripled, and that of North America has multiplied thirty to forty times. This new humanity, actually created by the new sources of wealth, lives in masses and can only live in masses. If you alter one of the facts that contributes to the life of the mass, if you suppress the wealth that is being exploited, the aggregation or the unity of the individuals who together exploit this, if you take away their outlet or their profit from the collective activity, everything crumbles, the mass falls in ruins, the surplus population dies off, the children who were to be born fail to see the light of day.

There are hundreds of millions of persons whose very existence on this earth is justified and is possible only in the degree with which they are collectively linked to the power and utility of the economic mass. That is why the instinct-to-survive of immense numbers of men drives them more and more toward mass-life. That is why it is impossible to conceive of the success or the endurance of any forms of civilization which would not satisfy the essential needs of masses as such.

Each mass constitutes a whole, in its relations with others, in the living conditions of its members, in its rise and fall. Compared with the tremendous effects which the decline of the coal or the textile industry may have on the fate of all its participants, how trivial seem the quarrels between owner and worker, between one trade-union and another, between producer and consumer, between wholesaler and retailer.

Furthermore, so long as the mass, conceived as an organic means of existence, dominates individual and collective movements, these movements have no significance except inasmuch as they affect the nature of the economic mass or its relations with the outside world. Thus the revolution in Germany, following the war, had no lasting effect, because it changed none of the economic factors which brought about the development of the German people, and assured their existence. On the other hand, the Russian revolution was an event of immense significance not only to the Russians themselves, but to the entire world, from the moment that it destroyed the machinery of production in eastern Europe. Famine and black ruin, upon a vast scale, were brought to millions of

beings, the hopeless survivors of broken or dispersed economic masses.

Most men are dependent on economic solidarity not only for their work and their physical well-being but, in a measure varying with their education, for their customs and morals as well. Depression in an industry makes more prostitutes than the very temptation of vice. A given type of industrial agglomeration creates a state of affairs which will determine, in turn, certain moral customs, certain political tendencies, certain ways of amusement, from which will result, in the long run, certain hereditary traits.

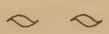
Because no component part of the economic mass can exist independently of the rest or can, for this reason, escape collective pressure or avoid the accidents of every-day life, each component part is therefore a greater slave to physical law than the citizen of former days ever was.

It is not enough to preach to particular groups that they should try to preserve the social balance; nor is it enough to try to prevent their colliding with each other. There must first of all be the assurance of a certain harmony in their natural

conditions and relations. Through a series of reactions—which will be found to have their causes in some deeper, material disorder—one group will find itself at war with its neighbors, another will destroy the family institution, without either the groups or their individual members having any clear idea of the evolution they are undergoing.

In our own time, there is not a single nation that believes itself responsible for the war, because there is no nation that in making war did not feel itself caught in the chains of destiny. In the same way, the people of the United States, the "preachiest" on earth, tend unconsciously to destroy the basis of the family simply through their excessive preoccupation with business.

Peace, human existence and progress to-day are, then, no longer a matter of the free will of individuals, but of material and collective laws.



In order for some balance to exist between the immediate desires of men, each economic mass must be proportionate to the territory or the resources that it exploits. Wars are almost always caused, in the last analysis, by overpopulation.

The mass must grow larger or smaller by easy

stages. A too sudden development of an industry, or its too sudden collapse, causes violent ebb and flow in the population, swift raising and lowering of the standards of living, social disturbances before which even the traditional discipline of a people is powerless. There are individual and collective habits in each country. The moral, social, and political stability of a people is much firmer in the older industrial regions than in newer ones. In England for example, the oldest industrial nation, one finds the workers frankly conservative in their tendencies.

The mass must not be destructively exclusive; it must suffer opportunities for work or for other types of activity to arise and to flourish about it, encouraging also regular interchange of service with other groups, so that famine and feast periods may be adjusted without violence. At this point we come up against two kinds of excesses: that of protectionism whereby economic groups go to the extreme of asphyxiating themselves in order to fight competition; and that of the intense specialization in trades, which makes the worker dependent on a particular kind of tool instead of upon a cycle of labor. Every man should know at least two trades:

this would even be of great advantage to him in his main occupation.

But the health of the economic mass does not depend alone on stability of conditions and commercial intercourse. It involves also the steadfastness of their collective wills. But here we approach the domain of education.

In each mass individual desires must become coherent, directed toward a common objective, which is commonly understood and sought after. From this point of view the economic masses of the United States are greatly superior to those of other lands because the American masses have received an education based on the joint ideas of "service" and "gain"; whereas masses in Latin countries are bred in the spirit of individual questioning, free criticism and disputes over first principles. For the latter the result of an action seems less important than the motive for taking such action.

It is necessary, finally, that all the masses despite their purely physical organization accept a certain ideal of civilization. Otherwise they would tend to collide stupidly and trample each other down. Undoubtedly, the consideration of their own interests or risks in the long run may serve at times

as a brake. But the purposeless materialism of selfish appetites, such brutal forces as are always in play, may be effectually restrained only by the awareness of a common ideal to be upheld, and the fear of punishment which non-observance involves.

It is to this end that religions, philosophies and the idea of patriotism serve.

III. THE RESISTANCE OF NATIONAL GROUPS

Since the new equilibrium of society has as its basis the establishment of economic masses and their intercourse with each other, what rôle then does the idea of nationalism, fostered by traditional patriotic sentiment, play?

If the nations reached the stage where they were concerned only with their material interests, they would be merely sealing their own doom. The idea of the nation is inseparable from the idea of tradition and territory. And now mechanism, the handmaiden of modern progress, points not toward tradition but toward invention; and the new uniformity of interests created by mechanism exceeds the old limits of territories, spreads rapidly beyond frontiers. . . .

A coal basin has no political boundaries. Nor

have iron ore deposits. Nor does a region favorable to textile manufacture respect established borders. The North of France exports its products by way of Antwerp. Central Europe has its outlet on the Mediterranean either at Marseilles, Genoa, Trieste or Salonica. Soon the cheapest way of reaching the Northwest of the United States will be through Canada.

Along all frontiers, more and more, there is a migration of labor that reveals the employers to be not only indifferent to national prejudices but actually opposed to them. Do we not have great factories which "straddle" three boundary lines and fall under the jurisdiction of three countries?

Thus the economic masses reveal the working of new interests which are by their very nature hostile to the old idea of territorial frontiers. These new interests bring about large displacements of working populations and of productive power; they unite in international trusts; they tend to create new and changing forms of government, through their own frontierless geography, their own methods of expansion and defense, their secret understandings, their diplomacy.

It is clear that the idea of a nation reduced to

merely material ends could not long resist the force of a process of economic consolidation that transcends all national frontiers.

However, nations have up to now resisted successfully the inroads of the new forces. But they resist with weapons of varying strength.

Opposed to the phenomena of economic consolidation and interdependence which obliterates frontiers, there are still to be seen examples of self-sufficiency, as to production and needs, in certain countries. Self-sufficiency may indeed still be possible in a country like the United States, with immense territories, countless wealth, and a vast margin of untapped resources for future development. But no country in Europe has such luck; nor has any in Asia. For almost all of these people it is necessary to sacrifice some of their independence in return for necessary foodstuffs or foreign markets. As a matter of fact, economic isolationism is a poor program, precisely because in the economic field it fights under a handicap against trusts and masses which are utterly indifferent to nationalism.

A stronger objection, although not a fatal one by any means, is that which considers political ends

superior to economic ones. Yet the state, guardian and servant of political ends, is subject to impulses of very different character, in accordance with its own particular makeup and with the development of the society it serves. Under the pressure of economic progress it assumes more and more the appearance of representing only a combination of interests.

This may come to pass as easily in a democratic régime as under a dictatorship.

The democratic state is founded upon the principle of agreement in beliefs and interests of all its so-considered equal citizens. And yet in order to work effectually in the direction of a political ideal, this agreement presupposing equality, presupposes individualism as well. Now the economic development of to-day, as we have seen, sacrifices the individual to the mass: with the result that the liberty of a democracy to-day is no longer of any use to individual citizens but to grouped interests fighting among themselves for power. Far from protecting the nation from the effects of mass-economics, an unrestrictedly democratic government encourages such masses to become masters of the nation. The same holds for a dictatorship: one

might define the power of a dictatorship as resting upon a very definite group of interests, extensive, highly favored, and in sharp opposition to other interests.

Thus the nation will not be protected against the overwhelming pressure of the mass; and neither economic isolation nor the theory of the independence and detachment of the political State will help it to endure.

On the other hand the nation may more effectively defend its existence as such by holding to the idea of the *fatherland*, the fatherland being considered not as a mere community of interests but as a fountainhead of precious traditions, which must be safeguarded, and of moral and intellectual impulsions whose vigor must be sustained.

And here we arrive at the real problem. The universal extension of material, economic forces, of technical knowledge and applied science will inevitably bring about an outer uniformity in all human customs. Will it also result in the ruin of traditions, and in the birth, out of their ruins, of a new civilization which will have nothing in common with its predecessors?

IV. THE NEW NEEDS OF MANKIND AND THE ENDS OF CIVILIZATION

It is clear that a new influence is filtering into and shaping the aspirations and thought of men throughout the whole world to-day. All people from now on possess a common language-of-thought and a common method of action: that of the applied sciences. This language and this means of action conveys to persons or groups everywhere the immediate certainty of a comparatively easy, and almost uninterrupted conquest over nature, and therefore the promise of an early material emancipation: the earthly millennium. Furthermore such notions may be absorbed by the rudest minds. A boy from the slums, barely able to read, may show a gift for mechanics. A Berber from the Atlas Mountains may use the telephone as well as a New York stock broker. A Negro of Mozambique, a Parisian street-singer, a Minnesota farm-hand, and an English lord all experience the same pleasure in driving an automobile.

It is from such observations that Count Keyserling surmises that the human type of

the future civilization is to be the *taxi-driver*. . . .

Every civilization in order to maintain its vigor must have both an element of permanence in it and an ability to adapt itself to changed circumstances. The history of the Catholic Church furnishes the most striking example of this.

A few men, dreamers, ascetics, scientists, artists, may be able to detach themselves from the needs of every-day life and escape the material influences of their environment. But this small number of men may not have the slightest influence upon the destiny of an entire civilization, or at least, they are not capable of determining what action they will take nor the conditions under which they will take it. It is the crowd that, according to its whims or its necessities, will suddenly seize upon some portion of the thinker's or scientist's work and apply it in a manner unforeseen by the author. Thus the inventor of the printing press, four centuries after his death, is responsible in some measure for universal suffrage, whereas during his own lifetime he changed nothing at all.

The immediate wants of the crowd now domi-

nate all institutions and the various forms of civilization, granting them in turn the privilege of death, of life, or resurrection. In fact it would be impossible to keep the average man attached to an idea or a manner of living which offered no prospects of improving his immediate existence or which was sharply opposed to the facts he must face.

A man leading a sedentary life was formerly quite isolated and could live independently, in the bosom of his own family. Above all he appreciated those instruments of civilization which protected him: the police, law, social conventions, classifications, social divisions, established currencies. As long as nothing molested him, he wanted for nothing.

But when he felt these institutions holding him back he thought of other things. He began to think especially of improving his position in the social order. And so he did not halt until he had brought about the overthrow of privileges, and of the established hierarchies. This has been the whole drift of the political currents of the last two centuries.

To-day, the individual is no longer isolated. He depends on the solidarity of mass interests. He is

chiefly busy in acquiring a degree of well-being that will console him for the slavery that mass-life inflicts upon him; he is bent upon securing his share of the material progress which his activity helps to create.

Now inasmuch as man no longer acts alone, but consciously or unconsciously functions within the limits of a close solidarity, and in unison with a vast group of other men in circumstances similar to his own, his demands assume a breadth and a quality of impatience hitherto unknown. These demands, which brook neither delay nor compromise, subject the general progress of humanity more than ever to the pressure of immediate desire, to the influence of popular tastes and aspirations.

The public press, commerce, politics, all reflect this condition unmistakably.

But these forces of change to which the external forms of civilization must adapt themselves, do not alter the eternal qualities of the human type. They do not alter human nature, any more than they do the deeper human instincts. They do not take precedence over the creative imagina-

tion, which remains the high privilege of the individual, as against the herd instincts of possession and submission.

If a hundred million men use automobiles, impose their way of thinking on the newspapers and literature, become arbiters of fashion and force industry to produce certain things to the exclusion of others—all that this means is that from now on it would be impossible to make these men live like shepherds in a pastoral society, or tribesmen in a patriarchal one. It does not mean that this hundred million men, as a mass, can invent an automobile or write a book. It does not mean that the individual inventor and author are not potent enough to direct, or change if need be, the tastes of the multitude by interpreting them. Nor does the new crowd-life alter the fact that the mass is composed of individuals who bear within themselves acquired or inherited moral aspirations, and who feel at times the intolerable longing to escape from the cycle of material progress,—a longing which sometimes becomes irrepressible and overpowering in spite of all that may be said or done.

We may "universalize" the sciences, the technical arts, and fashions; we may "socialize" to the limit

all the ways and means of living: the creative imagination will always precede the tastes of the multitude, and therefore influence them profoundly, provided that it responds to their immediate problems and needs. Now, the creative imagination always presupposes that detachment or independence of the mind which is held to be the prerogative of original genius and enterprise; it also requires, apparently, the maintenance of domiciles or sanctuaries which are utterly removed from the pressure of a too massive and vulgar evolution.

The problem, then, is not: "What new civilization will arise out of the ruins of the old one?" It is: "Of all the existing civilizations, which one possesses sufficient moral and physical vigor to adapt itself to mass-needs, in order to impose itself on the rest of the world?"

V. THE REAL ISSUE IS BETWEEN EUROPE AND AMERICA

The contest for the mastery of the world may give rise either to a conflict of brute force, or to a conflict of social and intellectual authority, or

finally, to one in which both material and intellectual powers will be engaged.

A mere struggle of brute force negates the very idea of civilization. It would involve only a destructive war comparable to the "great invasions" which in ancient times, even up to the Middles Ages, engulfed Europe periodically. Such a danger seemed definitely removed in the nineteenth century by the technical and military superiority of the so-called "civilized" States. But as the more "backward" people learn the usage of implements, arms, and weapons of modern warfare, the old danger will be revived, although diminished somewhat by the fact that money, the "nerves of war," involves nowadays the far-flung ramification of credit and commercial activity existing only in certain forms of society. The Russian Bolshevists have learned this to their sorrow, as will the Chinese or the Moslems, if the same opportunity should offer itself.

The so-called modern civilization has arrived at the point where, like the Roman civilization, it may die, but not without having first forced its murderers to marry it. Japan is already an example of this.

If in order to conquer by violence, the colored races must bend themselves to scientific discipline and to the social forms that the white race has invented, it is obvious that the latter need decline only through its own deliberate sins. It is also clear that in the present cycle of history, only the white races have as yet the means to dispute the mastery of the world.

This privileged position may endure for a long or short time. Nothing prevents us from imagining an era when the other races, having assimilated the methods of the white man, will add something new to them which will permit them to make an important advance on their part. But for the moment the predominance of the white races remains unchallenged.

Besides, it is the white race that has created the economic masses whose influence to-day is shaping the evolution of all human society. The principal mass civilizations, the most numerous by far, the best equipped with machinery, and the most "conscious" of their needs, are to be found in Europe and America.

Europe and America share then the mastery of the world. But Europe and America no longer

represent the same type of civilization. America no longer leans upon Europe. America is accentuating her points of difference on essential matters. This impressive fact did not become clear to us until the beginning of the twentieth century and many people are unaware of it as yet, despite the lessons of the last war. Any unprejudiced mind perceives it at first glance.

The struggle of civilizations is to be henceforth a contest between Europe and America: can they join in a common effort? Or, if they cannot, which of the two will be responsible for the destiny of the white race?

But first let us see in what manner Europe has jeopardized her supremacy.

Europe has been suffering from an excess of population restrained within too small and too rigid limits.

The population of Europe tripled during the nineteenth century. Three inhabitants must live where only one lived before. Despite the increase of wealth, this means that territory has shrunken and living conditions have become less stable. For

the first time the European lacks room to turn around in.

Out of this state of things there arose an amazing expansion of European energy over the other continents. The advantage accruing from this irradiation of European vitality was only temporary; enfeeblement resulted in the long run. Those who departed went to find better opportunities, more space, fortune, freedom. They found these blessings seldom and even more seldom did they find them all combined. But somewhere in North America they found the things they sought all combined, in profusion, beyond their fondest dreams. America had, evidently, something invaluable that Europe lacked, since numberless Europeans have had to go and seek it there.

Meanwhile, in the center of Europe, overpopulation rendered the various nationalities more irritable and more ambitious. Hence more frequent wars, and of a new character: in the slightly more stable Europe of former times wars were fought to change boundaries and adjust in a measure the balance of power; in the new Europe they seem to be becoming "struggles for life," conflicts in which peoples stake their all to win,

wars of extermination. . . . Hence a new source of weakness compared with America, for whom space assures peace.

Overpopulation in Europe did not come about by chance. It came in response to the new opportunities for work, sustenance and well-being which the discoveries and the intoxicating advance of science had promised. Thus new masses took form within limits too old and therefore too narrow and resistant. The manifest weaknesses of the social system, another cause of Europe's decline, obsessed her inhabitants. A social weakness indeed: for in America men struggled to create new methods of gain, fought for the partition of benefits, ceaselessly accruing; in Europe men fought over the very basis of society.

Finally under the effects of its own expanding force, due to overpopulation, Europe began to lose its cohesion. It was divided into three systems of balance: the British, the Russian-Asiatic combines (each influenced in some degree by extra-European interests), and the continental system, an agglomeration of irreconcilable nationalities.

However, Europe has kept her richest heritage, which is her inventive genius. This is perhaps due

to the fact that she has not only been unwilling to relinquish her old framework, but has also preserved the independence of her spiritual and traditional institutions.

The problem for Europe is to preserve those supreme and strategic faculties, while at the same time adapting herself to the phenomena of mass-life which threaten to become an overwhelming force from now on and to whose conditions America has already adjusted her own civilization.

PART TWO

THE PRESSURE OF THE MASSES

CHAPTER TWO

THE MASSES AND POLITICS

I. HOW POLITICAL SYSTEMS ARE DETERMINED

Politics is supposed to be based on certain general principles. But in this connection, history teaches us that the principles generally detach themselves from events after-the-fact, or are hopelessly mixed up with them. We might define it all as a practical art, applicable to special circumstances and to concrete needs.

Nations waver in their politics between the principle of authority and that of liberty. The principle of authority justifies monarchy and dictatorship: monarchy being the rule of regular, that is, consecrated and hereditary authority, while dictatorship is the rule, in a crisis, of authority accepted as a violent remedy, borne for a long or short period by the body politic. The principle of

liberty appears under diverse forms of government; constitutional monarchy which serves as a kind of permanent framework for parliamentarism; the simple republican system, liberal toward ideas and conservative in social matters; and the democratic republic, which tends, I feel, rather to equality than to liberty. In the democratic republic which seeks equality instead of liberty the tendency is toward socialism. . . . Sometimes, when the cycle has been completed, it begins over again.

Around these cycles, from time immemorial, controversies over doctrines and even civil struggles have raged, which involve or even excite to boiling pitch the interests of individuals and groups,—all this being the object of the political "game" of parties.

But in reality there is a certain rhythm perceptible in this interplay which corresponds to a certain order in the march of events.

It is customary to say that the system of monarchy corresponds to the period in which the formation and growth of States took place. Thus the European Powers had as one of their principal concerns for some time, the selection of kings for

the Balkan States that had just been formed and whose people were deemed incapable of governing themselves. But in reality the "phenomenon" of monarchy has a much wider meaning.

After every period of social chaos when men long to reëstablish order they inevitably resort to the authoritarian forms of government. A people never passes from demagogy to liberalism. In emerging from a period of disorder they essay monarchy or dictatorship. However, it is not by the act of their coming into power, but by their duration, that monarchies construct great States. Their advent simply marks a reaction in the social order. Their staying-power implies factors other than the merely political ones of holding power or showing foresight in the contests between peoples. The difficult problem for absolute governments, once order has been established, is to substitute for the prestige gained by their social usefulness, a corresponding political prestige. If they succeed in this they hold out for some time, a few years or several centuries, depending upon the loyalty of their armies and the wisdom of their counselors, that is, of the aristocracy which they encourage and support.

Dictatorship is absolute rule in its first phase only—that of the reëstablishment of order and responding to the most pressing needs. Chiefly because of this, dictators have a well-known tendency, once order has been established, to create new dangers which must sometimes be met by fresh wars. When dictators give way to this tendency they are doomed; for they always end by evoking anew the kind of disorders they had quelled.

Once we understand that monarchy and dictatorship are the classical reactions to disorder, we can easily foretell what kind of development political institutions in Russia will take. There is not the slightest chance that Russia will emerge directly from the Soviet régime to a liberal parliamentary and bourgeois régime. What is much more probable is that one of the "dictators of the people" will some day acquire enough power to impose on his compatriots, by means of absolute authority, a normal system of government and administration.

Despite frequent claims to the contrary, monarchies and dictatorships adjust themselves easily

to a greater diversity of conditions than do republics and democracies, because their principal strength comes from within, instead of being granted from without.

We can very easily understand how a people anxious to conserve its labor and its goods, or to expand or to defend itself, may call upon the authoritarian form of government, whatever system of property ownership or class-division may prevail among that people. It is only the pretext for using that authority which will vary.

It is this that explains why we find monarchies and dictatorships everywhere, in Europe, in Africa, in America, in Asia,—even under the name of "republic." True republics are very scarce, very localized, and resemble each other only in name.

The liberal republic—which must not be confused, as is so often done, with the aristocratic and dictatorial republic of the ancient Romans, or with the city-oligarchies of the Mediterranean type,—is the most agreeable and the most fragile of all régimes.

Such a system can only survive when there is social and economic stability. Force and passion

must not prevail here. There is presupposed a general accord based on reason and a continued improvement in measure with the advance of popular education. It precludes the possibility of needs or crises which would give rise to passions stronger than reason. It takes for granted that the people through their calm existence, will always have the means for and the wish to improve their general knowledge.

Such a régime must lean very strongly upon a law which defends the rights of private property. Otherwise the enlightened classes, those who direct the education and the reasoning of the people, by losing their wealth would also be exposed to the loss of their magistrature.

The equalitarian or democratic republic, in order to endure, requires slightly different conditions, which are no less difficult to maintain. It needs, above all, security from without and a rich territory.

In its foreign relations such a régime suffers from lack of discipline as well as of flexibility, and from the want of foresight engendered by equalitarian demands. If it is not safeguarded (para-

doxically enough) by some aggression, it wavers always between demagogy and nationalism. Internally, unrestricted competition disturbs labor and the production of artificial wealth: if the natural resources do not supply the deficit the populace becomes miserable and sinks below the level of its competitors.

In fact the world has up to the present time known only two democratic republics that have been able to "stand the gaff": the United States, prodigally rich in natural resources and secure from all menace; and the French Republic, also rich, and self-sufficient, but compelled from time to time to swallow its equalitarian principles in order to resist invasion.

Here then are the conditions which determine the various types of political government. These conditions are at once too fundamental and too general for the new scale of human agglomerations to affect them.

But if political forms under given conditions are no different from what they have always been, on the other hand the matter, the purpose, and the

impulses of politics are being altered more and more by the working of mass-economics.

II. POLITICS AND ECONOMICS IN CONFLICT

It is often remarked that "parties grow old." What grows old, however, is not the idea of parties; these have always existed, under all régimes, and will always exist. The contests of rival political forces for power—royal or parliamentary—helps in some measure to balance the working of government. How many times have kings or dictators, in order to govern more easily, fanned rival ambitions among their servitors! Danger arises when the permanent framework is no longer strong enough to contain the rivals, or when the parties deliberately ignore this fact. Then civil war breaks out. Civil war, in truth, suggests not so much senility in such parties, as heightened activity. Political old age would be indicated rather by inertia or impotence.

To-day, strange as it may seem, we are witnessing everywhere among the nations of the white race, a simultaneous decay and awakening of parties. Decline in some instances is due to the fact that the old parties no longer correspond in their

object and make-up to the new associations of interest. The regeneration of others results from the fact that the new interests use old parties not as their interpreters but as their vehicles or tools; in the absence of new formulæ that would express their present aims more precisely they make use of the old alignment of rivalries as they find it. But the old partisanships can yield no more than they contain; superannuated and insubstantial, they still know how to call men to battle; but then, the battle ended, they reveal their incapacity for any positive achievement.

Could not the old parties adapt themselves to the new realities? They could, if it were a question any longer of a scattering of individuals whose interests they were to collect under one banner. But nowadays such interests do not manifest themselves in individual forms; they manifest themselves in the organization of economic masses. Such economic masses function outside of parties, and exert pressure upon them. Parties could not absorb these new interests and preoccupations without being dissolved in them, that is to say without abdicating: for the artificial and haphazard discipline of parties would be dominated

in the long run by the rule of the economic masses, which is the rule of necessity.

Here, we confront, then, the timeworn debate between Politics and Economics.

Politics, in a general sense, comprises two functions: government and administration. Government, in foreign affairs, must further or defend national interests; at home it must insure some balance or accord between various factions and support the forces that are useful to the whole body politic. Administration, however, is concerned with solving concrete problems as they come up, in the light of temporary conditions, but in a sustained, continuous effort.

Truly, the exercise of government is an art, its procedure subject to eternal laws. These laws are laws of psychology, individual or social psychology. They vary only in the slight degree with which human instincts and reflexes show the influence of climate.

But government is not only an art. In order to direct foreign affairs and domestic politics it must above all include a kind of prevision. Now prevision implies a purposefulness, a sense for imme-

diate realities, for probable opportunities, and an understanding of the *milieu* in its broadest meanings. Purpose, realities, opportunities, *milieux*—all these change. Impelled as they are by economic laws, changes take place in our time with a rapidity and a sweep that is overwhelming.

When two nations, to-day, claim the same oil-fields, their governments can no longer negotiate the affair as they would formerly settle a question of precedence or of boundary-line. They are subjected to the pressure of influences in which the fate of individuals is no longer at stake but rather that of masses, associated in action, and whose very existence depends on the settlement of the moot-question. The political artistry of the negotiator is thus greatly hampered, as well as his ability to play off sentimental gains against material losses.

In the past it was possible for governments, in taking an administrative action, to consider only the advantages accruing to the class of citizens involved and to their own authority over the public. To-day, the slightest undertaking may provoke widespread economic tremors and social readjustments which often have consequences that can not be foreseen. That is why the internal policy of

modern governments, even under the rule of dictators, is composed of incessant hesitations, gropings and "regrets." . . .

III. THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE POLITICAL GAME

Outside of those nations where economic progress has scarcely made itself felt, one sees everywhere certain economic combinations of interest, in partial or complete form, beneficial or injurious, obviating, little by little, the old quarrels over political doctrines and local prejudices. Of course this kind of substitution is not immediately visible in votes on popular questions. But it is surely a great mistake to believe that elections reveal the deeper stirrings of modern political currents, especially in countries where they take place only at stated intervals. The silent, daily pressure of concerted groups of interest is far more important than the ephemeral expression of the vote.

The vote—for thus do the old parties survive!—is supposed to secure for the electors the means of "rewarding" or "punishing" one or another of

their "servants"; the vote in reality exercises a kind of correction upon the politician (much more than upon the political platform), which gratifies the self-love of the citizens.

This personal element lends a certain attraction to the electoral process which anyone can well appreciate. It may just as well make its appeal to several persons—a committee, a group—as to the individual, and always influences the choice of the voter. All systems of popular election in which the platform has been separated from the personality of the candidate have failed miserably. When there is a "straight ticket" the popularity or unpopularity of a certain name determines the fate of the entire list.

Although at the elections, which are only a kind of civic festival, an ephemeral transaction at best, the citizen considers only the partisan and personal aspects of the question before him, his attitude changes strikingly with regard to actual government practice; for where government is concerned the masses see only their material and immediate interests. Political passions, personal like or dislike, may dominate the elections. But once they are over, the prestige of the office-holder will depend

on his success in responding to the varying, but always concrete, needs of the mass.

Out of personal dislike for an employer or property-owner, a group of workers or small shopkeepers may elect a revolutionary candidate. But if the "revolutionary," in office, attempts "experiments" which upset labor conditions and tie up trade, long before the next election comes round he will meet with so much resistance that he will be forced to abandon his projects or gamble on dictatorial measures. The dictatorship itself will not be able to endure unless it is backed by a definite set of interests. In either case the predominance of one set of interests over another will be the political law.

At the other extreme, the mass may elect conservatives with a severe program of retrenchment or reform. As soon as some reform, however, threatens the immediate needs of that mass, the conservatives, like the "radicals" of the other régime can have no recourse other than abdication, dictatorship or demagogy.

In short the rigmarole of elections, which is but the illusory intervention of citizens on traditional or personal grounds, has far less influence on gov-

ernment than the powerful, sustained pressure by the association of interests which makes up the economic mass.

Can we foresee a time when the vote will come to be only the abstract reflection of material group interests? It does not seem possible. As long as there is the vote, it will serve to designate political persons; and sentimental preferences will continue to decide between them.

It is highly improbable that personal issues will ever disappear from politics. On the other hand it is very possible that political figures will have to concern themselves more and more directly with the economic needs of the mass, as these new exigencies, more and more, definitely bring about new problems and policies for the governing body.

All this will not do away with politics; it will simply modify its nature, both for elective and appointive officers.

The (electoral) history of socialism in Europe is the first example of a mass—in particular, the working class, arbitrarily isolating itself from the whole of the economic body—seeking to elect, not

some representative authorized by certain traditions, or standing for some political doctrine, but a sort of puppet, a super-numerary of that mass as a mass. When the people of the factories send a worker to parliament, they know well—how could they expect anything else?—that he possesses no political craftsmanship which might confer prestige and authority upon him. As far as politics is concerned the people are consciously making the wrong move. They do this deliberately, however, in order to show that for them, at least, the qualities representative of the group mean more than those proper to the individual.

It is also to be noted that the liberal and individualistic *bourgeoisie* does not generally choose an employer or an industrial magnate as its representative. This middle class tends rather to pick lawyers, teachers, doctors, retired officers or civil officials. In other words, they choose men separated like themselves from the fighting legions of the economic mass, thus revealing their fear of this new kind of pressure and its menacing power.

On the other hand the wealthy upper classes, owners of land and of collective enterprises, generally prefer their deputies to be drawn from

among employers, industrial leaders and great landowners. This upper class has the same tendency to indicate its economic position by its political representatives as the members of the working classes.

Here we have the key to the whole development of democratic politics. It is the rapid decline in influence, from one election-day to another, of the liberal and individualistic middle-class. This class, placed outside of the essential economic organism, with interests apart, perceives its field of political action shrinking steadily in measure with the spread and dominance of mass-economics, doubly represented in legislatures, by conservatives or capitalists on the one side, and laborites or socialists on the other.

In Italy, the dictatorship has given an exciting character to this development. Mussolini has been at times the spokesman of the working classes and at others the agent of the capitalists. Whether he serves one or the other, whether he wavers between the two, it is none the less a fact that his main idea is to represent *functioning* economic forces rather

than the outworn formulæ of the individualistic *bourgeoisie* that had been governing Italy loosely for the past fifty years.

From this point of view Mussolini's dictatorship has a great deal in common with governments that seem utterly different. In England the Liberal Party has been ground to pieces between the Conservative and the Labor forces. In Germany the liberal factions no longer mean anything at all in face of the three major parties, which are the conservative or nationalistic, the Centrist, and the Socialist groups, each of which are *blocs* of determined and localized interests. In France, a country whose evolution seems slower because of the moderating force of small landowners, the same phenomena may be observed, although less distinctly. But French liberalism and radicalism, aware of the menace, is already seeking safety in the heart of economic alignments; liberalism on the side of the grouped capitalists; radicalism with that of the labor unions. In the United States, the "Republican" party which is protectionist and holds the real power of the country, represents the dominant economic interests; while the "Democratic" party, deeply divided in itself, serves more often

as a haven for the "intellectuals" and the dissenters. . . .

We observe, then, a universal tendency toward the seizure of the political field by economic forces.

This tendency becomes well-nigh irresistible when it all becomes a question, not of parties and electoral disputes but of the functioning of government itself. The individualistic middle-class may hold the reins of government for a time, but they soon find it useless to resist the onslaught of organized economic interest.

In fact little by little all the matter and machinery of government falls under the sway of mass economics.

Finance, for example! . . . How can the financial problems of a government be distinguished from the general economic ones? Receipts are simply taxes levied upon the returns of capital and labor, upon trade and consumption, upon money, credits, merchandise. Disbursements are simply subsidies distributed among the different departments of public administration, and the diverse agencies which stimulate, maintain, or con-

trol the national activity. The currency is simply the scale of prices which may vary according to the country's development or exhaustion of its wealth.

Problems of diplomacy?—There is no longer a diplomatic "conversation" that does not have some economic aspect or cause. When a nation tries for new territories it is because she has a surplus of workers or merchandise, a dearth of raw materials, or restraint upon her activities. To-day, when two countries wish to coöperate with each other they begin by adjusting their tariff systems and agreeing to commercial reciprocity. The various factors considered involve usually a concern for "future business," the placing of sums of capital, the interests of rival groups or corporations.

As to national defense!—an army means nothing unless the resources of industry are behind it.

And finally, as to domestic politics, it becomes in nearly all cases a question of economic strife or rivalry between corporations, cities, regions, mass-interests. For the people the price of bread or sugar is of far greater import than the name of the ruler of the land.

IV. THE ATTITUDE OF THE MASSES TOWARD POLITICS

The barometer which indicates to what degree one country or another has developed in the directions mentioned above, is the manner in which the economic mass exerts pressure on politics.

In Europe up to now it has been most often the case that the economic body has been artificially divided: on one side the captains and lieutenants of industry stand, and on the other the rank and file of workers. In America, the contrary is the case: the economic masses or groups almost always present a united front, worker and factory-owner, for instance, joining together in favor of protective tariffs. In Russia the mass has destroyed itself, by following blindly the outworn principle of the opposition of "classes." In other countries such as Spain the mass assumes a regional character.

Indeed, it is when the economic masses differ as to their attitude toward politics that politics is able to keep its identity. When, however, workers and owners of capital act in perfect agreement on pub-

lic questions, then politics becomes merely a tool.

Will the economic masses realize their own nature enough to present a "united front" toward politics and consequently be enabled to turn it to their own interests solely? Or will the tendency toward "class-struggle," and the divisions resulting therefrom, end as in Russia by sapping the very vitality of the mass?

There is no doubt that among strong peoples, animated with the spirit of youth, having a practical morality and a taste for social well-being, the mass will become more and more *coherent* and united.

The economic evolution of the world promises no lasting future for the idea of "class-struggle." During the last hundred years humanity has improved the facilities for happiness if it has not increased happiness itself. The discoveries of science revealed to man unsuspected sources of opportunity and wealth. About these sources of wealth the masses of population were formed, joining in the exploitation of the new riches, and increasing in ratio to such exploitation. . . . Because their growth and prosperity came out of the

external impulse given by science, the masses were not obliged at first to place rigid restrictions on themselves.

But perhaps we must prepare for the day when invention and science, which up to now have favored the growth of the masses, will work in the opposite sense by reducing the need for human labor; when the feverish creation of new opportunities for work by the invention of new industries or the exploitation of new territories will cease. And when this day comes, all the individuals who form the economic mass, seeing that it has ceased to grow and fearing that it will shrink, will take a stand against the notion of "classes."

When the "struggle for life" is uppermost, the idea of the "class-struggle" loses all its force.

The "class struggle" by splitting up the economic mass prevents it from bending politics completely to its will. The subjection of politics, however, is not far off, and will occur when heightened competition makes the different segments of the mass aware of the importance of a common defense.

At this point politics will no longer reflect doc-

trines, nor sentiments, nor whimsies. It will be the exact reflection of universal competition.

V. STRONG AND WEAK POINTS OF THE MASS

Old-fashioned liberals used to extol the advance of popular education and speak of the influence of intelligent "public opinion" on politics. This idea was theoretically correct, but it paid no attention to underlying conditions.

It seems natural to believe that a people, blessed with stability of labor and resources, freed from killing competition, and revering therefore her "intellectual leaders," would eventually find the average level of intelligence in the great body of citizens raised little by little to a higher plane of understanding. Unfortunately the modern masses live under conditions which are rendered highly precarious by the surprise-attacks of progress and competitive invention. It is because they are made panicky, from time to time, by sudden turns of the situation which seem to menace their immediate livelihood, and feel themselves drawn into large social movements, whose sweep they cannot grasp, that the masses tend to pay little attention to those who deal in "ideas" and look for inter-

preters who are closer to them, who voice their daily anxieties and pressing problems. Victims, successively, to shocks and "crises" whose cause is obscure to them, they now cry out bitterly against their lot, or now submit to it passively: their understanding cannot grasp unforeseen events, nor can it cope with the shifting conditions under which they live.

We must once and for all make clear to ourselves what the capacities and the limitations of the masses are in the political field.

The economic masses through their formation have brought about great material and moral benefits to mankind. It is owing partly to the intensely practical or economic character of their interests that we may attribute the decay of fanaticism and bigotry in the world. It is because men have come to realize that the important thing in life is not to impose their prejudices of culture, creed or race upon others, but to work hard and prove their worth in practical fields of endeavor; it is because conditions of labor and of living have brought them materially closer to their fellowmen all over the world that they have become aware of the folly of certain hatreds and persecutions.

The mass civilization has done more for human well-being and dignity than the most advanced individualism. The ideal of individual liberty does not alter the fact that the isolated individual has only the feeblest means of protecting himself when he makes an individual effort. Once within the economic mass, on the other hand, the individual is benefited by a community of interests which is far more effective than any theoretical principle or law.

The mass idea has enriched the whole idea of government, humanized the very objects of politics. Through its rising pressure the governing class has been constrained, willy-nilly, to regard as paramount the well-being of the whole population. The State has become the responsible administrator, always subject to control, of a general and collective prosperity which it can no longer disregard, for an instant, in the selfish way of hereditary autocrats.

The economic masses contain marvelous resources for material progress, not only because they are producers but because they are consumers. The consuming power of a man who is spurred on by the impetus of collective labor and comfort is

ten times greater than that of a man living alone. Nowadays production increases only in so far as consumption stimulates it or leads the way.

Through the density and the unity of effort which they represent the economic masses have far extended the power of man to defend himself against natural calamities of all kinds. Once the helpless victim of floods, famines, epidemics, man used to perish, submissive and obscure: his misery interested only himself and the few persons near him. To-day such a cataclysm disturbs so many interdependent interests that the collective whole of society feels the tremors and moves to confront the danger.

And finally the mass economics gives civilization to-day a beauty and a grandeur without compare: the beauty of a swift intense life, of strange, immeasurable force; the grandeur of immense numbers of souls, who to survive must dwell in a more complex and flexible harmony than they have ever enjoyed before.

The two great failings of the economic mass are, on the one hand, its tendency to ignore or to abandon those intellectual and moral springs which

nourish human energy; and on the other, to overlook or misunderstand the future needs of the State. Tradition, far-sightedness, in other words, the qualities of political art will always escape the comprehension of the mass as such. Not that an individual within the mass may not be cultivated and forward-looking; it is that the mass in its common desire is overborne by the temptation of concrete, immediate gain for itself. How often we see labor-leaders, for instance, embarrassed and torn between the consideration of the future interests of their group and the immediate near-sighted demand of their fellows!

VI. COUNTERBALANCING FORCES AND THE FUNCTIONING OF POLITICS

The greatest problem for countries whose future is threatened by the advancing tide of mass-economics in politics will be to find within and outside of themselves forces capable of safeguarding the public weal and preserving indispensable traditions.

The possible counter-balancing factors seem few in number and of varying strength. One might be inclined at first glance to look for them in

the old individualism of the so-called liberal professions and in the educated and independent middle-classes. But is it likely that the middle-classes will remain independent of the industrial organism for long? As the economic groups strengthen their hold on society, they take over the liberal professions which then become their auxiliaries. How many lawyers, advisors, doctors, professors, etc., are already the "aides" or the "counselors" of vast enterprises and men of affairs!

Opposed to all this we find only two forces of resistance: that of the farmers (or peasants), which has a social and economic force of a particular character; and those activities which are considered apart, like religion, science, the cult of ideas, art. . . .

In the modern world, the farmers constitute, in their own way, an economic mass. But this mass is unusual in that it allows for considerable difference in opinions and action on the part of its members. Contacts are not so close as in the other masses; hence new influences spread much more slowly and traditions are longer preserved. The tillers of the soil, whatever their tools or whatever

the changed conditions of the age may bring elsewhere, must conform to the immutable laws of the seasons and the earth for their existence. The human character of this class changes but little; it remains a permanent and original reservoir nourishing the urban masses. Economically it is not a rigid group: each farmer, or peasant, may cling to his personal outlook, may have leisure to reflect, to reason, to avoid committing himself. He does not suffer such concerted and intense pressure from immediate wants. His closeness to nature gives him the sense of eternal things, as well as a sense of relative values. Out of necessity he has learned to be patient, to plan far ahead. Isolation develops in him the power of imagination, but it is always held within a fixed frame, that is, a farm, a borough, a country.

In all countries the farmer, as long as he continues to exist, plays an important rôle. It is not the "business man," it is the farmer, and it is his enterprising brother, the "settler," who have built up the American nation. Under a hundred successive dynasties the Egyptian *fellah* has preserved the spirit of Egypt.

All the more must the tiller of the soil thrive in

a material sense in order that essential human traditions may be maintained.

The "intellectuals" have for their task the enlightenment and inspiration of the mass, in the highest sense. We call "intellectuals" those for whom knowledge, science and toil have a nobler object than that of quick profit or the gratification of selfish interest. We find them in all levels of society, and even within the economic masses—which nothing prevents them from adhering to—or better, to which they ought to adhere. Humble or strong, they form the true "aristocracy," those for whom the *highest* good has a value in itself surpassing all concerns for the self and the moment.

One of the points of superiority of Europe is in its small towns where the peasants and thinkers join forces, offsetting in a measure the sway of the great cities over the economic masses. In America, the small town is simply an off-shoot of the great city.

Realizing, on the one hand, the pressure of mass-economics, and on the other, the counterbalancing forces that persist in society, we may analyze the functioning of politics with regard to

the constant impulses and the concrete desires of mankind.

The general rules may be summed up as follows:

All social or political disorder, if it persists for some time, causes a reaction to autocratic rule. Such procedure indicates, generally, that the interests of the group have triumphed over particular interests.

All "revolutions" result in dictatorship or monarchy; else the whole society disappears. Whoever preaches revolution, preaches, in the next breath, dictatorship. Inversely, dictatorship involves as its prerequisite, disorder.

Periods of well-being and liberty make people more exacting and favor the spirit of criticism. To give the people the benefits of peace and leisure is not always the road to popularity. Periods of comfort, on the other hand, favoring as they do the critical spirit, lend prestige to parliamentarism. Such periods are rare and seldom last. Also in most countries, parliamentarism lives in constant opposition to, or on terms of compromise with the rule of authority.

The particular character of a régime is more a matter of theory than of practice. In reality it depends upon an established machinery of coun-

selors, agents, henchmen of the party in power, which is in other words the ruling "aristocracy." After a revolution it is precisely this "machine" that is hardest to put together again. Most new régimes end by gathering together and using whatever pieces of the old machine are still lying around and handy. . . .

With regard to the living conditions of humanity, such as they have become through the development of the economic masses, more rigorous rules seem to be in operation.

No government can nowadays stay in power unless it takes into account the material and immediate demands of the population. In the old days a régime would endure in spite of famine, money depreciation, and hard times. To-day this seems no longer possible. In the future, perhaps, only dictatorships will grow out of wide-spread economic or financial disorders.

One may go further and say even that it is impossible to govern the masses in the name of principles or programs, which they acclaimed but yesterday, if such principles in practice are injurious to their interests to-day.

This overwhelming impulse of the mass to think

only in terms of its concrete and momentary interests constantly provokes new dangers and hardships for modern politics. The general policy of the State, even though established in view of the future needs of these economic masses, is nearly always in conflict with the demands and passions of these same masses.

Politics could scarcely fulfill its function in the higher interests of the mass itself, unless it used as a counter-balancing force, interests outside the mass: that is, the farmers, when there are enough of them; the "thinkers," when they are worthy of the name.

In fact it will be found that in nearly all countries, governments depend upon a press which they inspire themselves. However as governments change frequently the inspiration changes often too. There is no continuity, no extended, sustained plan for a general program. And since the press, in the meantime, is always in danger of falling under the influence of economic forces, or worse, of speculators in money, the safekeeping of such programs is precarious indeed.

After all, one of the sole guarantees of farsighted public interest in the present world is the

self-respect of writers. Nobody can stop the press from becoming a business. But no business can hold sway over the independence of a writer, if he respects himself, and if he finds among his peers an equal regard for free thought.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MASSES AND POWER

I. COMPETITION BETWEEN MASSES

THE conflict between masses is far more bitter than the struggle for survival among individuals, and these mass conflicts often reach extremes of brutality, which at times are impulsive, and at others quite cold-blooded.

By himself, the individual may always retain a sense of the relationship of his own person, actions, rights, to those of other men in the group. He may keep himself within bounds; he may, in all good faith, feel doubts about the preëminence of his selfish claims over those of the public weal.

The mass, on the contrary, never feels any doubt about the justice of claims which it presses, through its fear, ambition or desire. Made up as it is of collective and inter-acting units it has the illusion of being a complete whole; and, since it

embraces great numbers, tends to confuse its appetites with the good of all humanity.

Thus the economic masses disturb international relations by demands whose insistence and aggressiveness are highly dangerous to the peace. Formerly States fought over historical differences, territorial quarrels and military rivalries, which from time to time were provoked or appeased. Diplomatic conversations and war settled such "incidents." To-day, "incidents" of such a nature seem trivial as compared to the permanent and vast competition of specialized labor in one land with the specialized labor of another. Economic competition intensifies all forms of nationalism and tends to absorb them.

In such a state of affairs the whole conception of power is altered. From now on, power can only be of value in ratio to the gratifying of mass desires, and its adjustment to the new forces for defense or conquest that these masses represent.

There is a saying that "all is fair in business." What shall we say when business competition is waged between anonymous masses and the whole human or personal element disappears? The law of

profit, on this plane, does away with all pretense of good manners and scruples. . . .

At bottom one of the striking facts about modern society is that labor, utterly specialized, suppressing initiative and personality, no longer yields any satisfaction in itself; it is worth something only in proportion to the wages it brings, and so reduces men's thoughts to an exclusive preoccupation with gain.

The economic masses are composed of families and individuals who generally have abandoned their previous mode of living to share in the exploitation of new resources. These people have sacrificed those personal associations and liberties to which they should naturally cling. All have accepted an existence whose rhythms are severe, imperious, brutal, which makes their lives different from that of galley-slaves only in that they receive wages.

And so we have this chief result: that the employers, like the workers, think only of increasing their return, of more and more pay. Hence, this other consequence: that social struggles for the past hundred years have had no other object than the sharing of spoils—an incessant contest between profit and wages.

However as these opposed members of the same mass, workers and employers, come to realize the oneness of their interest, the mass, instead of being divided in itself, directs its combativeness to other objects.

Modern economics thus links together inescapably the constraint of labor with the intoxication of profit. As soon as the drunkenness wears off, the restraints become unbearable; as soon as the profits dwindle, the mass considers itself the victim of aggressions, of crying injustice.

I say, as soon as the profits dwindle:—I might say even when they stop growing larger! . . .

For, one of the pronounced effects of mechanical labor is to destroy in men, and above all, in men who are regimented into a mass, the sense of the inevitable alternation of good and bad fortune. Because his machine always turns faster and more easily, man believes in infinite progress and ever-increasing gain. The "boom" periods thus create in the masses a kind of hypnosis that wards off all thought of danger and "hard times."

But as soon as the rhythm of the machines slows up, or as soon as they begin to creak, humanity

wakes up to feel obscure and griping aches, the agony of a gambler who sees that he may have played the wrong card. It takes little more, then, for this agony to bring on cynical or terrible consequences.

Competition between masses may be permanent or incidental.

In order to assure the continuity of their vital rhythm (which involves an ever mounting scale of profits or wages) these masses need most of all to be guaranteed natural resources, means of production and of distribution. For them the fundamentals of success are control of raw materials, perfection of machinery and the ability to command the greatest number of markets.

Formerly, the right to territory was disputed for reasons which concerned nations as such, political, strategic, financial or nationalistic. . . . Now it is no longer the interests proper of a State that count, it is the interests of such and such a mass or economic group, of which the State is merely the instrument, that decide the fate of a territory.

II. THE CONTEST FOR RAW MATERIALS

The axis of all economic power is the control of raw materials and commodities which industry turns into finished goods or which the population consumes. In this age, there is no privilege a people can own which surpasses in importance that of raw material resources. The holder of raw materials either converts them himself, in which case he is better able than his competitors to lower the price of the goods at the very base of supply; or else he sells his stuff in the raw state, to others who refine it. In this case he puts a maximum tax on the market, in his selling price, before delivery and without risk, a tax that he is free to maintain and even raise so long as the consumer demand or competition warrants.

One need only give heed to the more or less secret realities of international policy to perceive a continual struggle, passionate and multifarious, being silently waged at the sources of raw material. The struggle is rendered more complex by the fact that chemistry has begun to produce artificially materials which up to now only Nature had

supplied. Thus to the lust for gaining and holding natural wealth of inestimable value, is added the dread lest these riches be destroyed by some laboratory discovery. Perhaps the "trusts" will some day gain complete control of invention. . . .

Actual world-power is distributed according to control of raw material. Young nations feel this so keenly that their nationalism consists solely in defending against foreigners what they call their "national wealth." For it is not enough for a people merely to have inherited coal-beds or oil fields, in order to have world-power: they must be ready and able to protect these natural riches by force, bear the cost of exploitation, and sell the finished products thereof.

The supremacy of Europe in the nineteenth century was based largely on her coal and iron. These two resources, exploited from early times, assured Europe first place in the production of iron ore, the manufacture of machinery and, at the same time, in armaments of war. They created opportunities for labor which caused new populations to swarm up, which in turn, through their needs,

stimulated and enriched industries and spread their products throughout the world.

Then, other raw materials that Europe did not possess, notably cotton and oil, began to enjoy enormous usage. The United States, rich in these things, and already provided with ample coal and iron, enhanced her favored position.

A favored position, however, which is by no means guaranteed. How drastically the tables may be turned if we learn how to derive from coal a less expensive oil, or if artificial textiles menace the position of the cotton plant!

In these colossal and silent rivalries, the tide of battle may sway. But in the end fortune favors always those who are masters of the sea. That is why the war for raw materials like all others, ends nowadays in a race for naval construction. England will grant everything to the United States except supremacy on the high seas. . . .

To own or be able to produce raw materials seems the decisive advantage; but the more arduous problem is to transport and distribute them: and this final stage of the process is always under the control of the mistress of the seas. Free in her move-

ments, she is able to venture far afield in quest of them, if they are wanting at home. Controlling transportation, she also controls competition, and is enabled to control prices and markets. The new organization of humanity into economic masses has changed but little the old law of history which confers the scepter of power upon the mariner! New York may be a colossal ant-hill, buzzing with prodigious activities, ambitions, energies. London is something unique, sacred, grandiose: capital of the oceans!

The secret power of the United States lies in its having escaped for a long time through the expanse and wealth of its territory, the need of making economic warfare on the high seas. But how long can this be avoided? Americans are beginning to perceive the limits of their opportunities narrowing: the recent rubber situation has opened their eyes.

III. IMPERIALISM AND PROTECTIONISM

The vital needs of industry exceed by far the mere control of raw material. After having produced, man must sell; sell more and more and at a higher profit in accordance with the steady increase

of the fixed capital and the labor invested, both of which make up the cost of production.

Here the whole question of power shows new aspects: the need for conquering new markets which is the object of imperialism, and the defense of existent markets which is the object of protectionism. Of the two largest economic systems in the world, the English and the American, one depends on imperialism and the other on protectionism.

But protectionism for the moment seems to be gaining more adherents, because the margin of free expansion on this earth is actually shrinking.

Imperialism, one of whose forms is colonization, meant up to the beginning of the twentieth century a nearly continuous drive of the masses toward "new markets" and "vacant land." But long before 1914 the United States revealed the attitude of the newer countries toward European expansion by erecting a high tariff barrier around her territory. Since then, all nations have followed this example more or less. It is only by a narrow margin that the British Empire is able to survive the protectionism

of her Dominions. This policy from now on will be found to be universal, resulting as it does from a kind of industrial saturation to be felt everywhere, and leaving but little place for the overprolific peoples.

Inevitably, among the stronger nations, wherever protectionism is carried to excess, there results, after a time, a renewed desire for space and an urge toward imperialism.

But, for the moment, the economic masses are almost all protectionist.

There is a cautious protectionism and a jealous, or extreme form of protectionism; a protectionism resorted to for defense, and one (paradoxically enough) that is designed as a means of attack.

When a nation possesses, all combined, raw materials in abundance, a perfected system of manufacture, sufficient labor and large markets, it has virtually nothing more to hope for, and so closes its doors on outsiders, or "receives" (whenever it does) with rather bad grace. The masses live in peace, assured of increasing prosperity because they do not fear competition and because they know their wages will rise with the cost of

living, since production and consumption move hand in hand. They will run only two risks from time to time: that of overproduction and scarcity of money, both engendered by excessive optimism or speculation. America is a perfect example of such a case of beneficial protectionism. It postulates a domestic state of unhampered activity and trade whose volume surpasses that of all the older nations. England is trying desperately to re-arrange her Empire on the same plan. And some day Russia perhaps will discover the opportunities she possesses for a similar "Empire."

Because they have arrived at economic systems, nearly complete in themselves, and to a high degree successful, the Anglo-Saxon governments preach peace, in other words the *status quo*. They are "regionalists" and pacifists.

Another case of fortunate protectionism, although rarer and less solidly established, is that of a country like France, where native traditions and genius permit the manufacture of "quality" products that others must buy from her through not having the "talent" or taste for producing them themselves. However the sale of works of art and of quality products is always undependable, since it

satisfies not basic needs but superfluous ones. Hence a people like the French may not base their well-being exclusively on industrial profits: they must adapt themselves to opportunities, husband their peculiar sources of wealth, and not provoke through a stupid tariff wall the retaliatory closing of markets where their products are sold.

A jealous and aggressive type of protectionism often takes the place of the more cautious and peaceful protectionism we have been discussing. It is the weapon of overpopulated nations which possess insufficient and inadequate raw material supplies, and which must compete in world markets through the low price of their products, or, in other words, through the low cost of their labor. Such is the case of Germany and Japan and Italy. Protectionism there is a kind of subterfuge and not a proper economic measure.

In such cases there are always certain economic masses, or parts of them, sacrificed. The burden falls upon those who must earn low wages and endure a lower standard of living, in order that their products may undersell similar ones in the markets of the world. The position of these people

is uncomfortable, and they grope for ways to improve their lot. Germany, therefore, harps on the project for a League of Nations (an economic United States of Europe), that would give her the space and the freedom from restraint she needs. Italy demands a new partition of certain raw material sources and colonial markets. . . .

Another aggressive type of protectionism is that of the younger nations who, lacking the capital necessary to exploit their own natural riches, shut them off from exploitation by foreigners. In their national pride they deem it necessary to ward off the pressure of outside masses, or to drive a stiff bargain with them through the concessions they are willing to make.

IV. THE IDEA OF THE STATE IMPERILLED

In view of the life and death struggle of masses, in view of the fact that this bitter rivalry ends in a contest for the possession of certain territories, lands, sources of raw material and markets, and in view of the unscrupulous and cold-blooded attitude of the masses, when they function collectively, we should perhaps arrive at the conclusion that wars instead of disappearing would tend to become more

frequent and more terrible. . . . We should certainly have to fear for this, were it not for the fact that the masses are creating safety-valves for their rivalries in the shape of agreements, international *cartels* and trusts which overrun the boundaries of nations. These "understandings" by supplanting the old aggregation of national interests with the new combination of international ones, is surely a sign of the great weakness of the whole idea of State or nation in the face of overwhelming economic combines.

At the present time the economic groups remain almost completely within national compartments. But nothing has stopped or can stop a group or an individual from moving out of one national compartment into another, from a region where opportunities are poor to one where they are plentiful. Nothing prevents the Italian workingman from coming to establish himself in France, nor a European company from setting up branch factories in the United States, or vice versa.

Thus the power of industry and commerce extends itself in a universal net-work. And the conclusion we must draw from this is that the whole notion of the State is deeply affected, and that the

traditional seats of power are now profoundly altered.

The internationalization of economic groups now becomes a force working on an equal footing with the rightful power of the States, which are still sustained by nationalistic habits. Soon this purely economic force, self-sufficient in its means and ends, will supplant the other power.

Such a development may go very far. It may lead to incredible changes—and the influence of trusts on the newspapers of many nations is already an unmistakable sign—in the moral and intellectual direction of humanity.

We are in fact only at the preliminary stages of this now. Stubborn national peculiarities, the habit of bitter competition, the still too great variety in the forms of production and in consumer needs, the alarm of nations whose autonomy is menaced,—all this causes the trusts, *cartels,* and international labor-unions, to encounter various checks, interruptions, dangers which impede them and make them hesitate to reveal their true character or come out into the open. Once the period of hesitation is past, and sensibilities are appeased or crushed as may be the case, when more definite plans are conceived,

when the directing heads and the masses realize the advantages to be had from solidarity, it is easy to imagine the universal power of world-trusts controlling cotton, oil, iron, silk. . . .

In this event we should probably find ourselves witnessing rather unpleasant developments . . . or else one *cartel* will have become absolute master of a vital industry throughout the world: its power will be such that no nation and no manifestation of human liberty will dare to brook it. Its wealth alone, not to mention other means at its command, would permit it to rule the acts and thoughts of all men through the printed word or picture. Or again two or three fabulous trusts may engage in a fight for supremacy, and in the heat of their struggle impose new and strange ordeals upon the whole universe. . . .

Fortunately there are certain brakes still existing. There are, in the first place, few men whose brains can conceive, direct and maintain systems that are well-nigh universal. There is the spirit of competition which will never die so long as there is the slightest chance of profit for the competitor. There is finally the difficulty of subduing non-industrial

populations, meaning peasants: the peasant keeps his liberty through the modesty of his wants, and in times of stringency knows how to subsist on his own resources.

We see then that the State is no longer the sole source of power and that the very notion of the State is decaying.

V. THE TRANSFORMATION OF STATE POWER

What new force, on the other hand, do the economic groups bring to the nations?

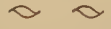
We must distinguish, at this point, between the older nations, whose structure is historical, and the relatively new ones.

To the States formed long ago the economic mass often brings an accretion of power which is highly advantageous. Witness how the rapid growth of population, labor, trade, enterprise, brings a huge increase to the national revenues. Or witness how new machinery and new measures useful for attack or defense enable a people to grasp its opportunities more surely. Or, often, how there is a knitting together of national impulses, identified now with a more practical and dynamic kind of unity, rather than sentimental or historical prejudices.

What a difference between the Germany of ancient times, with its factional strife and feeble growth, and the German Empire, enormous aggregation of economic masses formed through the *Zollverein!* This *Zollverein,* a simple agreement as to customs-duties, was fated to give birth to a power that in the end menaced all the others. In this same manner the comparative importance of Belgium, one of Europe's sensitive points, has been tripled or quadrupled during the last fifty years through the development of its industries: and compared with let us say the Dutch, the Belgians have no doubt derived therefrom a heightened sense of their national identity. The British Empire took form from the industrial and financial system that flourished in Great Britain. Japan has moved up within a few short years from the place of an outlying, exotic State to the ranks of the Great Powers, through the industrial forces that brought economic transformation.

On the other hand, consider the prostration and the comparative decay of States whose power is not yet founded on firmly entrenched economic groups. We may take Spain. . . . Or the Tzarist Empire which foundered under the single blow of

a revolution, no doubt because the economic units in existence were not strong or widespread enough to supplement the fantastic politics of an artificial and personal autocracy. Under analogous circumstances the German *Reich* led by great industrial magnates ruined its creditors and redeemed its military defeat.



But if the economic masses have strengthened the power of State they have at the same time given that power new qualities of instability and transiency.

The power and influence of a nation over other nations used to be based on somewhat constant factors: the advantages of her natural resources and situation, the permanent qualities of her people, the consistency and steady growth of her political efforts, the wealth due to long habits of saving.

Mass-economics changes all this. Natural resources no longer have a fixed value, since all depends on the ability to exploit them, their conformity to usage, and upon the changing effects of competition. The invention of a new machine, a chemical discovery, or the prospecting of new terrain, may overnight wipe out profits, make

machinery useless, cause huge displacements of population, and hence power. And we know that a slight disproportion between States in the matter of owning natural resources involves a parallel difference in their rate of growth, whether the thing at stake is iron, cotton or oil. Thus the actual power of States, previously affected only by the fortunes of war, lacks constancy and has a highly variable relation to that of others.

It is a far cry now from the old, historical bases of diplomacy.

Indeed, the instability of the new power offers greater risks for those States which were established far back in history, than for the younger ones.

For the younger nations, the economic groups constitute to a great extent the main pillar of strength, and almost the whole *raison d'être*. The adaptation of these units to the forms of the State is a natural process. (Thus the dangers of instability and change are lessened.) It is thus also that the growth of American power has been marked by the rhythm of continuous progress, undisputed, majestic. The Great War hastened it, but added noth-

ing to it. Nor do we have to look far, to discover the beginnings of a similar movement in the British Dominions.

Here we must re-open an old question. Does material power, which is to-day merely an aspect of prosperity, demand not only a certain magnitude of population but also a certain expanse of territory? In other words, what connection is there between power and space?

The example of the new societies—for they *are* societies rather than nations, properly—in Australia, Canada, the United States, shows that power gathers momentum much more rapidly within a roomy frame than a limited one. In the United States we shall observe all kinds of economic advantage resulting from the great amount of free space there is to move about in. It is the *counter-foil* of free trade. For the great open spaces of America combine the advantages of free trade within its borders with the advantages of protection, through the severity of the tariff barrier at those borders.

Besides, many new countries, chiefly because they are new, have been able to establish themselves ter-

ritorially on a grand scale, through not having the problem of historical segregations to solve, a problem which is, so to speak, the hereditary disease of Europe.

Europe will not abandon her historical divisions, because in renouncing their past, all her nations feel that they would be renouncing their own identity, destroying their own vitality. Will historical necessities, then, continue to oppose economic ones, lessening, little by little, Europe's chances for the future? May it not be said that the situation of Europe in fifty years will become like that of Asia, that other old continent which is so steeped in history? May not the new States of America and Australia through the mere advantage of their space and size eclipse the old continents?

It is to be doubted, however. Our doubts are founded on economic and political facts.

The notion of territorial space—the space which accounts for the prosperity of the new States—has come to be supplanted by a new conception, which is more flexible, and which is primarily economic: it is the international space as conceived by trusts and *cartels*. Now this economic notion of space

lends itself very easily to the historic sectionalism of the various countries.

And further, it is a striking fact that the new societies of vast territory exercise an influence in world politics which is almost inversely proportionate to their territory, and far smaller than that of the historical nations with confining limits. Consider the isolation of the United States, or the isolationist policy of Australia. The very wealth and spread of their territory makes these new peoples indifferent to things going on outside. And so initiative in international affairs rests with the older peoples.

CHAPTER FOUR

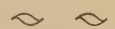
THE MASSES AND THE "SEX PROBLEM"

I. WOMEN'S SENSITIVENESS TO THE NEW INFLUENCES

THE advent of mass economics has not only transformed the conditions and the purpose of political action, threatened the ancient prerogatives of the States, and deformed the old arrangements for power; it has brought about changes in the perceptible behavior of human beings. All of us, depending upon our age, have perceived the progress of this transformation. The signs of it have become clearer since the last war which, having introduced to the world realities of unspeakable brutality, made candor at least more possible than before.

The metamorphosis I speak of, is complex, and has numerous phases which are of varying importance. But in one direction, at least, it has worked such an upheaval in our morals that our

most sanctified customs are endangered. I refer to the emancipation of woman, and to the malady which goes under the name of the "sex problem," which we suffer from more or less keenly according to the growth or the concentration of the masses in different lands; a malady which disturbs especially those more purely economic societies such as the United States.



Young women adapt themselves very quickly and naturally to new conditions and trends, as they do to new fashions. External changes, wars, panics, booms, have a more immediate effect on their mode of living than on that of men.

Formerly the circle of people who were sharply affected by the shock of such events was rather small: the people of the court and of the capital, let us say, some thousands of people at the most who felt the vibration of social cataclysms. Out in the provinces, the dramatic moments of history became quiet ripples, which subsided easily against the rock of ancient customs. Historians record with scant interest the brief periods of "licentiousness" or "moral relaxation" which have always followed great upheavals of the past.

But in this age it is no longer a matter of unimportant or passing disorders. Vast crowds of people, concentrated in stupendous centers of population feel the contagion of the slightest change in the social or economic order. The newspapers, the advertisements, the railroads, the automobile, disseminate the reaction with terrible speed to the inhabitants of distant towns and villages. And so the onslaught upon previously existing customs acquires a massive, overwhelming force, and comes with such terrible speed that there is no time to throw up a defense.

The new fashions or morals, beside being spread with surprising vigor, are also encouraged, sanctioned by the vast group interests which exploit them. Such and such a way of dressing, furnishing the home, feeding, amusing oneself, once advertised to the public and successfully "launched," becomes entrenched and defended through the solidarity of manufacturers, workers, wholesalers, shopkeepers, salesmen, all banded together in quest of profits they will commonly share.

In countries like the United States where the uniform, the *standardized* type holds sway, this tendency no longer meets any resistance on the part

of individual taste. He who would escape from the fixed morals or modes set by *standardization* must pay a fearful price; he must undergo a kind of penance. Innovations are not spread gradually from above down to the lower ranks; they assail the whole massed society at one stroke.

Women began by accepting the new influences somewhat diffidently. Then they submitted with better grace. By now, they embrace the new tendencies avidly, and seek to hasten their effects.

In other days human societies imposed more or less artificial modes of living on woman in order to protect her from her own weakness and the dangers this weakness entails. But a human being subjected to artificial conditions—save when these conditions express an explicit moral necessity—tends instinctively to change these conditions at every chance, or to evade them.

Woman is by nature quicker to take up innovations than man. She is curious. She is imprudent, because in general, although subjected to as brutal a struggle for existence, she takes a more optimistic view of human nature than does man. Her imagination being more receptive than active, she allows

none of the details of life which man casts aside or neglects, to escape her. Her mind, unhampered by theoretical considerations or future projects, is free to seize upon the concrete, the immediate fact.

All her instincts bend her vision upon the future. To move slowly is a sign of age. Her maternal functions and duties throw her on the side of that which is to be, instead of that which has been. If she renounced her youth and remained oblivious to the future she would cease to be woman and mother. She may show herself conservative in order to protect the heritage of her children, but never to preserve customs which her children will no longer use. Woman has, in truth, two lives: her own, and that of her children. Man has only one; his own, the finest aspect of which belongs to the past, object of all his longings and regrets. And man who precedes woman in action is always behind her in taste and fashion. We know that women "launch" artists, writers, actors; and that men most often limit themselves to commenting on women's choice.

Furthermore—and here is a trait that clarifies perhaps a whole aspect of the history of manners—woman does not ponder over the pros and cons of a

situation, does not give herself up to long vigils of reasoning, and hesitation, years on end. Her practical nature determines the end in view for her, at least at one stroke, and she is ready for any shifts to obtain it. She likes a thing, or she doesn't. She takes it up, or she doesn't. For fifty years men have debated whether they should give up the stiff collar and the dark suit, and they have not changed an iota of their dress. . . . In the same period of time, women have changed their fashions fifty times, and have now reached the stage where dresses end "above the knees."

Once free, woman moves very swiftly. She does not have the spirit of revolt. She has rather the instinct of imitation and the sense of adaptation. If she is "emancipated" it is not through her own efforts, but because of conditions of existence that draw her out of her traditional bounds and, depriving her of an artificially imposed protection, force her to see to her own defense.

II. THE EMANCIPATED WOMAN

New conditions of existence have come into play. . . . Woman was infinitely less prepared than man for the mass life of modern times. The eco-

nomic upheavals have suddenly lifted her out of her semi-secluded or sheltered ways and thrown her into the surging press of crowd life.

Every family, no matter how modest its means, used to have its own dwelling-place, and, save for those living in crowded cities, a dwelling-place completely separated from others. Within the home the family formed a little tribe, embracing the father, the mother, the children, unmarried aunts and uncles, and servants. Surrounding them was another tribe forming a larger, concentric circle, and composed of friends, members of the same profession, tradespeople or clients; in the country it would often be composed of a circle of farmers, laborers or artisans. Moral customs would vary in detail from one locality to another. But essentially the type was everywhere the same in countries of the white race. This type of home-life remained virtually intact until about the middle of the nineteenth century, when it began to give way little by little to the pressure of economic forces. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the evolution began to be very rapid. . . .

Gathered around the family and the home, friends and relatives all followed the same tradi-

tions, observed the same habits and cherished them in the same manner.

Within this double frame, familial and social, woman was severely protected, provided that she observed the conventions. She found within these domestic and social limits, everything she was supposed to be in need of. Her contacts with the world outside were confined merely to maintaining well established relations with kinsmen, friends and tradespeople. She lived in and for the home, guardian of the hearth, always, in a sense, something of a goddess, and always, too, something of a slave. It was here that her character was molded, and occasionally, her mind.

Thus situated, woman could see, frequent, encounter only those persons—from her husband to the postman—whose origin, education, habits, blemishes even, worldly and moral standing, were all known to her, all of it established by tradition or reputation. Within larger or narrower confines, against a brilliant or drab background, this held true for the wife of an artisan as for the wife of a merchant or gentleman. Only the courts and the capitals had customs apart; but these could not spread very far as we have seen.

Besides, woman did not have to fear "competition"; she did not have to defend affections and rights which were unquestioningly granted her. As a young girl, let us say of a certain rank, education and fortune, she was clearly assured, except if she were infirm or ugly, of a place in keeping with her station. Once married, in such a society as often by custom or law forbade divorce, she was certain, if not of her husband's affection, at least of the esteem of her kin and the devotion of all the persons attached to the house. She escaped completely from the bitter struggle for existence, once she consented to know life only within these narrow limits.

Thus sheltered, restrained, and—we may as well say the word—*guarded,* woman's position seemed endowed with great dignity, and at the same time with great fearsomeness. Everything about her contributed to the dignity of her position: the reverence she was shown, the domestic authority she was accorded, the attentions of her family and neighbors. But it was precisely because she had contact only with familiar beings that she felt so weak and disarmed as far as anything else was concerned. Thus disarmed, she remained constantly on her guard, through fear of her own reactions, or

through a sense of prudence that had been inspired in her. . . .

It was upon such a basis that for a long time the whole code of morals and the spirit of the conventions between the sexes rested. To sum it up, a man and a woman could not meet save within a pre-established frame; this frame offered them both great security so long as they heeded it, but rejected them brutally when they infringed upon it.

Some people still dispute—in a purely historical manner—as to whether the traditional code was more favorable to man or to woman. One would think at first glance that it favored man rather than woman. Man has no doubt, lost certain prerogatives; but on the other hand, when woman takes certain "liberties," man gains in certain "facilities" . . . Whatever may be the truth of this matter, economic transformations make all such retrospective discussions futile. The material changes already perceived, compel inevitably a revolution in morals which is in the act of being accomplished.

A great many members of the white race live to-day in vast urban centers. Those who do not live

in cities are at least in constant and easy contact with them, through trade and intercourse of all kinds with these human agglomerations.

What are these agglomerations? They are great and world-renowned cities: they set fashions, and spread them irresistibly, they gather together millions of inhabitants within a narrow space, where formerly only a few thousand families subsisted.

At one blow, then, what the Anglo-Saxons call "privacy" disappears: all that reserve and the means of private existence, which Europeans traveling in the United States have found alarmingly absent.

At all events, there are no more, or at least very few, private residences, no more detached homes. Life is lived in apartment-houses, in sections of floors, in barracks, so to speak; families jostle each other, experiencing common contacts and restraints; or, as in America, the tendency toward a kind of gregarious hotel or restaurant life spreads more and more, to be taken up, perhaps, by the whole population in the end. And what is to be said of the collective lodgings established in overcrowded Russian cities!

As the dwelling place becomes smaller and smaller the family group is reduced to a minimum

of importance: the father and mother are united for several hours, the children live at school or in the street, little is seen of relatives. If both husband and wife work they meet only in the evening: during the day they remain apart, each taken up by an entirely different set of interests, relationships, satisfactions and dangers. If the husband alone works, the wife, ill at ease in her constricting home, with its terribly limited perspectives, grows bored; she goes out, looks for distractions; and separation, even divorce, is as possible as if she were working every day like her husband.

The private dwelling is no more. The family group is no more. The considerate relatives, the servants—all gone, save for temporary (or mechanical?) ones. . . . There is no frame in which things are fixed, no control, no lasting affections, no point of support, no moral example. Woman loses, to be sure, the surveillance that surrounded her, but also the protection, the bonds of sentiment and the traditions which upheld her.

But there are many other far-reaching changes! Woman only used to see and meet people whom she knew or to whom she had been introduced. Now, in the street, in shops, offices, factories, buses, sub-

ways, theaters, cinemas, at her dressmaker's, at her dentist's, at every moment of the day she meets with strange faces, anonymous, unknown men. She meets them without preparation or introduction; she bumps into them by chance, unable to hazard even what "class" they belong to from their external appearance, since all men are coming to be dressed alike and to bear the same sober credentials!

Abandoned to herself, living within a mass of a purely economic nature, woman too is now subject to the pitiless laws of competition—competition with men at bread-winning, competition in the field of love with an indefinite number of other women. She no longer has any inviolable rights as the guardian of certain tribal or family traditions which would entitle her to the recognition and respect of those about her. From now on she has a "value" only as an individual, and is bandied about according to the force of circumstances and the whim of the bidder.

Whether it please her or no, she must modify her bearing and her costume in order to adjust herself to the new conditions of existence. It is impossible to imagine a woman who is forced to get into a

train, or a trolley or an automobile, four times a day, to work in an office or a factory, to be at her post at the same hour every morning, and to fight her way through brutal crowds on equal terms—it is impossible to imagine such a woman wearing crinolines. She will sacrifice everything to convenience, save her elegance. . . .

Such changes are in no way due to her "emancipation." They result from the definite demands of the economic situation upon her. To attempt to bring back the "old fashioned ways" of our great-grandmothers for the usages of to-day would be a foolish enterprise—and a dangerous one.

III. ADJUSTMENTS AND SPONTANEOUS REACTIONS OF WOMAN

Thrown brutally into a promiscuous mass life, woman has not yet had time to wait for the moralists to stop their groaning and formulate a new moral code. She has had to live. She has had to adjust herself to life. She does this as well as she can.

As soon as the home lost its meaning and became too constricted, too small to make "family life" very enticing, it was inevitable that woman should

begin to live more and more outside of the home. In advance of the mothers, young girls who were formerly under the most stringent surveillance, began to escape: for the mothers hesitated, held back by the care of their children. But inevitably the mothers followed their daughters.

The "emancipation," the coming-out-into-the-open of woman seemed to many observers a transitory phase of moral decline. But in reality this whole fact must be closely bound up with the effects of mass life which substitutes the attractions of the street for the attractions of the home. Of the numberless people who abandon their farms and villages for the city, few believe that they will live better there; all are drawn by the swarming spectacle of the street, its unresting clamor and alarm,—all the mass distractions of the great city.

In countries like the United States where the phenomena of mass civilization have reached greater extremes than elsewhere, we see women who greatly prefer to undertake difficult labor outside of the home, to living in the home. More and more often, young married women, after a few months of marriage, arrange to go back to work or

reënter business, even when they are possessed of some fortune.

It was necessary also for woman to change her demeanor in order to endure the shocks and blows of mass life. When she used to go outside of her home only once or twice a week she was naturally timid and reserved. How can she retain this attitude, when she must fight for her place with rough men, defend herself against impositions or insults, uphold her own rights alone against postal-employees, policemen, train conductors, the boss, the foreman? . . . As long as she had nothing to do with the anonymous "man-in-the-street," she could appear to ignore him. But when she is continually at grips with this "man-in-the-street," she is forced to consider him frankly, to measure his intentions and his strength. She is on her guard against risks, dangers, which she never knew about before; and better armed now, because better informed, she shows more assurance.

Here we attack a delicate subject: that of modesty.

Although she has shown a change of front, adjusted her attitude and her costume to the new

exigencies of life, so that she may carve out her own path, woman has still not won the game. In an age of bitter competition, she too must compete, and chiefly with other women. And in this game she could not neglect to use her most powerful weapon: seduction. Let us keep this in mind. . . . Woman will never be foolish about such matters. She knows that there are two kinds of seduction: the indirect one of mystery, and the direct one of the flesh. Woman is not so stupid as to believe that she can conquer the hearts of men through the brilliance of her reasoning power. And since mystery and poetic sentiment do not chime very well with the quaking of omnibuses, the roar of machines, or the human torrents of department stores, woman frankly tends instead toward a certain boldness.

She is adopting for this reason, the bearing and the guise of man.

Among the older generations her "revolt" meets of course with opposition. But if her parents are still to be "emancipated," if they still disapprove of her ways, the revolt is none the less completely achieved for her children. The new generations grow up in a changed world. They neither understand nor respect the old ways which seem only too

absurd to them. They declare frankly for the new morality which their epoch demands. Why in the world keep up the rigmarole about the mystery of sex, say the new women, since it is no longer feasible or useful? Why cling to certain disadvantages, or inequalities, when the privileges they used to bring exist no more? Is there not a kind of sincerity in being a *realist?*

Let us look at the more immediate results of all this.

Love always has the appearance which woman chooses to give to it. This appearance has become less gracious, but more open.

Now that she is compelled to protect and to "push" herself alone, woman shows a greater sense of reality in love, and at the same time is far more exacting. Her realism consist of the more frequent insistence on compensations of a worldly nature when the man in question only half-pleases. And she is more exacting, that is, more frankly sensual, when she can obtain the luxury of love for herself. The old framework of sentiment and protection having been broken, there remains only the power of money or purely physical attraction. Thus

woman takes precisely the same attitudes that she was wont to reproach man for! We are speaking, of course, of the average woman. In the mellower countries, having long traditions, there remains a greater margin for the play of delicate passion, of love which is romantic or *précieux*, than in countries of a recent prosperity. But this margin is narrowing all the time. Perhaps one of the contributing causes to the decline of the profession of poetry, is that poetry (alas!) no longer excitates women. Poetry was a kind of escape from life through dreams; woman has found another kind of escape. . . .

This evolution may have varying results, depending on whether the social situation assures or denies woman the means of making a living. Under healthy economic conditions that bestow remunerative work which is moderate and consistent with her nature, woman will no longer prostitute herself. Having lost the habit of being protected, and able now to provide for her own needs, she will be in a position to suppress the odious traffic that man imposed upon her too often in the past. She will accept or repulse love according to her convenience and pleasure. Even if woman will not appear

to have gained in "virtuousness" there will be an immense gain in her dignity or self-respect.

For the woman who does not want to be a mother, there is always a great temptation to choose the independence and liberty of bachelor-life in preference to the ties of a family. Improvement in the lot of woman, among the masses, results pretty generally in a reduced birth-rate. This is to be observed especially in the United States.

This change in the position of woman is also the deeper cause of the increasing number of divorces. From now on personal accord and sexual attraction are far more important considerations to woman than social advantages. When domestic harmony is gone, and the physical attraction of her mate is lessened, woman is no longer held back by fear of losing a protection that marriage no longer guarantees her, or that she can quite probably secure for herself. Aware of her new strength she gladly takes up her independence again.

We may conclude, then, that in countries which favor the material independence of woman, there results a greater feminine self-respect, more spontaneity and frankness with regard to love, but also far more frequent divorce. We note also this

paradox: individual morality is superior; but the institution of the family is in greater danger.

As for those countries whose degree of prosperity or whose economic development is not advanced enough to allow woman the independence of work, the "emancipation" of woman is only so much talk.

It results only in disgusting men with the family; in making the business of sex and prostitution more brutal. In the former case—where there is material independence of woman—love may gain, if not in duration, at least in sincerity; in the latter case—where there is a relaxation of moral restraints, but with woman still in material servitude—the relations between the sexes take on the character of a traffic, interrupted by passional crises.

We have shown how present-day conditions of mass-life, established in huge urban agglomerations, make it impossible to count on an early restoration of the old family traditions. It is possible that some day economic civilization may rebuild what it has destroyed: already the great industries are beginning to show concern for the family-life of the workingman. . . . But for the moment we must make our code of morals conform to our needs

without bringing on the ruin that we had meant to avoid.

IV. TOWARD A NEW MORAL CODE

It is useless to concern ourselves with external customs or superficial attitudes. The manners of women are bound to become more and more like those of men: to regret this would be as vain as to weep over the passing of the sedan chair or the gilded age of Louis XIV.

We must get at the roots of the problem and consider the true interests of woman, the true interests of man, and the true interests of the family, which are in fact that of all society. For unless we can learn to relish the idea of a kind of barracks-life for men and women, society cannot be conceived without the institution of the family.

The social interests of woman, that which she demands most urgently of society and bases all her other claims upon, is the assurance of being able to dispose of her body and of her affections in conformity with human dignity. She wishes never to be obliged, through the accidents of her environ-

ment, or her own weakness, to put them on sale at any old terms.

The great obstacle to this claim is not, as many feminists believe, the entrenched resistance of old laws or customs. It is precisely the very weakness of woman. To save her from obvious dangers to which her weakness exposes her, woman must either be protected or fortified. Hitherto she has been protected like a child, which is an excessive precaution. And now some would aspire to make her as strong as man, which is nothing if not illusory.

Nature, too, makes demands which never vary. She may be toned down a bit, put in her place for a time, but never abolished, or held down for an indefinite length of time.

Nature imposes a three-fold weakness on woman: a physical one as compared with man, aggravated by the fact that woman is always in the last analysis subjected to the most onerous consequences of love; a sentimental weakness, which makes her much more obedient than man to the mysterious proddings of instinct; an economic weakness in that woman is less apt than man to make the painful and regular effort necessary for earning a living.

Woman to-day must be fortified against this

three-fold weakness. But we cannot change nature. Some illusions are as easily formed as prejudices are slow to die. . . .

Nothing can make the physical strength of woman equal to that of man, and so she will never be able to give up the protection of one man against another. This should be enough to discredit the paradoxical statement that marriage is nothing but the invention of masculine egoism. In marriage woman finds that which she lacks most: strength. Present conditions of existence make it necessary for woman to develop, by all means possible, her powers of physical resistance. But from brutal attacks, she will always need to be protected by a man.

The same may be said for woman's sentimental and sexual weakness. No matter what she does, woman remains the victim of love, even if it be only that she grows old sooner than man. She may be educated, forearmed against risks which her nature subjects her to. But short of suppressing love and motherhood, or inverting her instincts, she will not be safe.

But even if she had suppressed love and maternity, perverted her instincts, as often happens in

societies where sex attraction has lost all its mystery, woman would still not have affected in any way her great economic weakness, which is perhaps most significant of all. . . . Parents who do not give their daughters education or some "trade" with which in time of need they may gain their living, are truly inhuman. Inhuman, because they expose their children, in a society where fortune changes quickly, to the most shameful risks.

And even supposing that certain women know how to acquire a technical or scientific training that makes them useful, or indispensable, how can we believe that during hard times, during periods of unemployment, men will tolerate the competition of cheap feminine labor?

The contest between men and women, so far as wages are concerned, involves danger and violence in the future. Furthermore, during hard times more trying efforts are demanded of the worker. In order to avoid the extra effort that she cannot supply, woman may be tempted to put herself under man's protection again, and at what cost!

The social interests of womankind demand that she emancipate herself and fortify her position, but avoid at the same time, all such excessive preten-

tions as would tend to forfeit the tenderness of man.

Her personal interests, and for that matter, her natural interests demand this. We may put the whole question in a few words. Freedom is a lovely thing for a woman of twenty. It is a sad affair for a woman of forty. But it is a sinister matter at fifty. . . .

And what of man?

Apparently the new morality has given him more opportunities for pleasure. But already, under varying circumstances (wherever woman is "emancipated"), we are becoming aware of a masculine *malaise*.

In truth the "emancipation" of woman, the dropping of such reserve as enhanced the mystery of sex, the whole disappearance of feminine modesty, has not increased man's taste for woman. On the contrary, in countries which have reached an advanced economic stage, such as the United States, England, Germany, we perceive a growing tendency in men to meet, to gather, to amuse themselves apart from women. Men run to their clubs, spend the week-end with their friends, not

to mention other symptoms. . . . It is a notorious fact that the young men of to-day find women less absorbing than did those of former times. They have been railed at for their lack of gallantry. Soon perhaps, only Orientals and negroes will pay court to women. . . .

In a general way, white men think more of business than of their mates, who naturally make this a matter of complaint nowadays.

But whenever the question is raised man shows himself quite troubled over woman's evolution. Even in countries where he tends to be most reserved about his feelings, such as the United States, he is willing to own up that he is deeply concerned over the breakdown of the family.

This is due to the fact that man is, at once, the creature of imagination, habit and ambition.

The "emancipation" of woman pleases his immature fancies. But it leaves his imagination cold, and offers little nourishment for the future. This shortcoming saddens modern man, unhappy as he is under the strain of a mechanical and stupefying existence. The captain of industry, the banker, the executive, the workingman even, who return home to find that their wives and daughters have gone out

for the evening, are all of them deprived of a great sentimental comfort, for lack of which they often suffer cruelly. As for the young man, who has lost interest in the mysteries of femininity, he is able to satisfy, in another fashion, his need for adventure and stimulation.

Because he suffers and struggles outside the home, while woman amuses herself outside, man has a more vivid sense of what the home means, of the need of order, of authority, and of jealously guarding his possessions. And because his mind is more constructive and farsighted, he is more disturbed than woman is by the dangers which such social instability threatens for the children. . . .

The masculine *malaise* which is due to the excesses of feminism is one of the most profound problems of modern society, one of the "secrets" of the white man's civilization. It smolders like a lighted fuse, hidden within the consciousness of men. It may burst out some day, in a reaction which may result in the renewed enslavement of women, or on the other hand in a kind of moral anarchy.

The fate of woman, no matter what she may do, depends on the good will and the respect of man. When man comes to despise woman it is impossible

to foretell the consequences. The example of Islam is near at hand. . . .

The education of man is of far greater import than the education of woman herself, as far as the position of woman is concerned. Now we cannot have any education without mothers, and we cannot have mothers without the family. Feminism will be nothing but a fleeting and tragic illusion unless the foundations of the family are safeguarded.

It is the keeping up or the disappearance of family instruction that will decide the attitude of generations to come toward the whole woman question—that will decide, in short, whether their attitude is to be brutal or respectful. It is up to woman herself, to determine all this by the limits she may or may not wish to put upon her emancipation!

Feminists are quite right in wishing woman godspeed; in seeking to forearm her and strengthen her position. But if they abandon the idea of the family they are preparing the worst kind of slavery for woman.

PART THREE

THE ORIGINALITY OF AMERICA

CHAPTER FIVE

A MASS CIVILIZATION

I. THE DEPARTURE FROM TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS

THE European, with a traditional background, generally feels an aversion to "discovering" America. Upon disembarking in the United States he most frequently suffers shocks and disappointments which are inevitable. Usually he comes seeking traditions, formulas, ways of living, which correspond to his own ideals and habits of thought, and which, alone, would permit him to conceive of America as a "civilized" continent.

Nowadays the least suggestion of the "exotic," of anything out of the ordinary, even though it appear barbarous, seems to justify the sympathy and the curiosity of the European. It is because of these qualities as well as the differences of language and costume that he willingly grants the Chinese, the Moslems, or the Hindus credit for having

created an original civilization. But the fact that the Americans speak English, wear similar clothes to that of Europeans, and that their appearance is in no way singular or curious, may be one of the contributing causes to the small attention which Europe has up to recently paid to America.

The European is unwilling to admit that his "cousin," similarly dressed, using the same speech, bearing a name of a kindred origin, is creating a superior mode of living, and is laying the foundations for a new civilization. Even when he affects to admire American things, he will not bring himself to admit American originality with good grace. In fact the originality of the American system most often escapes a man who is steeped in the political and social prejudices of the old world, because it is completely alien to such prejudices. The European, failing to understand the "soul" of the place, contemplates the astounding matter only, that is to say the natural resources, the monstrous machines, traffic, all of which American "bluster" has taken delight in featuring and advertising for the past hundred years. But the essence of it all the European will most often fail to grasp: I mean the magnificent and arduous labor of human regenera-

tion which has been going on and is still going on at the other side of the Atlantic.

Moreover the American is not adept at analyzing his own tendencies, at drawing his own description, at defining the "doctrines" implied in his work. Perhaps like many pathfinders or innovators who succeed in a great way, he doesn't know very well "just how it was all done." At times he offers the most pompous interpretations of his accomplishments, which are frequently inexact and even absurd. Remarkably precise and direct as he may be in his action, it is quite a different affair once he enters the sphere of mere *living;* for he is apt to proclaim the most childish beliefs and declare for the emptiest, the most bizarre kind of evangelism whenever he tries to draw theoretical principles from his experience.

The causes of this doctrinary incompetence are lodged exactly in the practical kind of vigor which Americans have. The American civilization, more than any other, has steered clear of theoretical systems, of preconceived frames, of too purely rational guiding principles, and shaped itself under the influence of concrete facts as they arose one by one. In spite of the claims of historians, politics has never

been detached from immediate interest, nor have the instincts of the people ever ceased following the lure of fortune or opportunity, whatever the moralists may say. The American civilization has grown by swift leaps and bounds, not by steps of reasoning. Still young it shines much better in the sphere of action than in that of reflection. In an adolescent of nineteen love is stronger than in a man of forty; although it is not so well expressed.

And in truth is not the very awkwardness of the American in expressing himself a sign of originality and of independence? If he were more like us, we should understand him more easily.

II. UNIFORMITY AND DISACCORD

The existence, side by side, upon a rather limited territory of extreme diversity, and yet, at the same time, of a certain general harmony, creates the veritable charm of European civilization. Achievements of many different kinds suggest the variety of settings and the vigor of national or local genius. The sense of harmony is evoked always by the common heritage, the common imprint of the Roman spirit which is shown everywhere in the fact that religion, art, city or state government are

established everywhere in a traditional and logical order.

Uniformity and disaccord, extending everywhere over a vast territory are, however, the ruling qualities which strike the eye of the newcomer in the United States. For one thing no particular or local genius is perceived, and for another there is no sense of a traditional framework of order.

This astonishing contrast is by no means due to chance, nor does it result from any want of common bonds between Europe and America. The Americans still have before their eyes the glittering relics of the harmonious and diversified civilization which Europe had planted upon their continent. It remained for them merely to continue it or passively to derive inspiration from it. Such relics are to be found intact in a hundred places, renowned or obscure. What could be in better taste or harmony than the "colonial" charm of old Salem? What evokes more nicely the genteel refinements of a by-gone age than the Vieux-Carré of New Orleans? And from the Gulf of Mexico to northern California, is scattered the lavishness, the color, the delicacy of the Andalusian spirit. . . . And even at Mount Vernon, sanctuary of George Wash-

ington, we have much less the sense of a "beginning" than of a sustained taste for simplicity which is of the best in Europe.

Americans do not disavow these remains of specifically European traditions: they tend much more to cherish and preserve them. But for them they are "curios" or "antiques," rather than objects of "utility"; they revere these monuments and relics as a stranger might do honor to some ancient temple. Their own religion is something else again.

They can no more ignore the spirit and traditions of Europe than they can her achievements, of which so many examples persist in their own country. Doubtless, they are ill informed of the details of Europe's history and of her present state, and all this seems to move them little. But they do not need to concern themselves with what Europe has done or is doing in order to "discover" her. Nearly all Americans stem from Europe; she is present in their thoughts and affections, in memories not easily effaced, in ties through race, or near or distant relations. Europe has remained their principal customer and their chief furnisher. Even their snobbishness directs itself toward Europe.

If they have come to build their civilization

along lines that scarcely resemble at all, and even oppose, at times, the European model, it is not through ignorance or misunderstanding or hostility. It is the outcome of completely different conditions, needs, problems.

III. THE SOCIAL APPEAL OF THE UNITED STATES

Two important facts in themselves are enough to indicate the originality, the spirit of modernity and independence which characterize the sphere of American civilization.

The first, which is we believe without equal or example in history, is that this enormous social organism, in which under an iron-handed police, the most novel as well as the most traditional forms of human activity are carried on at amazing speed and on a colossal scale, has been built up as if at one stroke and without any serious attention to either political ideals or theories of civil administration.

In academies and schools the particular importance of such or such an episode in the political history of the United States is still being discussed with dreadful earnestness. But the truth is that the American people owes nothing of any significance

to politics, which was always rather colorless at best in their case; and if not more so than elsewhere, played at least a much more passive part in their real destiny. Not only has the United States known no classical molds whatsoever, nor monarchistic, nor municipal, nor military ones, nor a State religion, nor vassalage to a king, nor vassalage to a faith; but from its very birth, it has been dominated almost exclusively by economic forces. We may observe only, that it has not escaped the formula of active aristocracies, a mother principle throughout all history which may be found working in all social structures.

The predominance of the economic and social factors over the political one in the development of the United States helps to separate her more than anything else from the European tradition. It is this difference that has determined everything. It is in accordance with this that the future will tell what the ultimate chances of America are. . . .

In the meantime let us make note of the fact that American "liberty" means nothing other than the freedom of economic and social activities from obstruction by the whole "political game." Hence the uncertainty, the incoherence, the "callowness" of

American politics. Hence, the irresistible appeal that the American social organism exercises upon individuals who are fed up on the "political excesses" of Europe.

The attractiveness of this new attitude, combined with the new driving-force that this society has inspired in human beings, is to my mind a second major aspect of American originality.

We do not believe that the United States is at all the famous melting-pot it has been said to be, and in which racial characteristics are completely fused. On the contrary there has hardly ever been a more striking demonstration of the permanence of racial character. One might go so far as to say that at the welcome hearth of this new home the attributes of each race become more sharply defined and as if stripped of all useless features. An Italian, an Irishman, a Slav, a Languedocian, a transplanted German, are all more easily recognizable at Seattle or at Houston, at Milwaukee, or at Los Angeles than at Paris or Brussels. But the miracle of it all is that this diversity of race that is such a profound cause of discord in the older States of Europe, which seem to have lost their power of absorption or regeneration, in America on the contrary seems to favor

the emergence of a special supertype. The common and voluntary forgetting of history results in all these races associating together in a new task. Thus it would appear that the particular seduction of life in America is that of "a new chance . . ." for humanity, a re-beginning—without the crushing burden of history and prejudice to weigh them down, and armed with all the advantages and inventions of modern science.

Unpleasant as it may all seem at first glance to the man who has fixed ways or habits of pleasure in Europe, the American civilization offers great attraction, on the other hand, to the man who would make a position for himself in the world. Ask the German Jew, who in some ten or twenty years has become the head of a great bank, ask the laborer from Mexico who sells the strength of his muscles in the South, or the Russian who speculates in California oil, or the Austrian violinist, or the Italian barber,—ask them where they come from. None of them will deny his origin and race; but all alike will proclaim their pride in America. A Russian from Odessa, told me that he was sending eighty dollars a month to his impoverished parents, and then added suddenly: "But I am an American,

sir! I am a good American!" For a long time America attracted only "laborers" and "speculators." Now she is beginning to lure even the "intellectuals."

The American "influence"? Let us not confuse things. The spread of American influence is still very feeble in comparison to her real power in the world. Her commercial and maritime penetration throughout the rest of the world is still quite inferior to what it is believed to be, and to what it might become. There is on the other hand a kind of social irradiation which is universally felt to-day and has a remarkable influence, to a varying degree, upon the ways of humanity everywhere.

This results in certain contrasts which the observer notes with some astonishment. For example, all of Latin America, under the leadership of impassioned Mexico, is up in arms against the imperialistic policy of the United States. But the same Latin Americans are almost completely dominated by the social prestige of the United States, and are bent, more or less consciously, on imitating the superior and successful type found to the north. Washington, no doubt, will never be relished as a

political capital for the Latin American people. But they reveal more and more definitely, with every passing year, the pervasive social influence of New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles. The time is near at hand when the United States will have divested Europe of its "worldly" prestige in the eyes of new nations. Does not America's influence upon Europe take on a more significant form every day? Politically, whatever some people may say, the influence of America is almost nil. Financially, America is rather strong, for reasons connected with the liquidation of the war. But in Europe, it is in the evolution of morals and tastes that American influence is most perceptible. One could draw quite an amazing picture of the invasion of "Americanism" to be witnessed in the oldest capitals of Europe, London, Paris, and Rome.

May we say, then, that the social prestige of the United States exceeds even her economic prestige? Americans often fail, or undergo serious disappointments outside of their own continent. Their "standardized" products are rarely suitable to the more particular needs of a divided and diversified Europe, and as to their average factories, they do not surpass in organization, economy, and effici-

ency, similar ones of the old world. But yet, universal interest is aroused in the whole organization of effort in the United States, by the precisely social character of American industry.

IV. AMERICAN SOCIETY AND THE PHENOMENA OF MASSES

A social organism rather than a body politic, the United States shows an originality and exercises an influence upon the rest of the world that is essentially social.

What, we should ask, are the actual merits of this original civilization and what is the force of its influence, with respect to the needs of the modern world?

In my opinion, they consist of this: that the American society offers, for the first time, an almost complete and comparatively happy example of mass civilization. Whereas other societies elsewhere have adjusted themselves, awkwardly, for better or for worse, to the phenomena of mass economics, or in other cases have ignored them and then belatedly sought to resist their march, or, misunderstanding the true needs of the situation have fallen into a state of anarchy and led to their

own destruction, during all this time, the United States has been evolving, moving forward and has become completely aware that her great fortune lies in the constant growth and the smooth functioning of the economic mass as a whole.

The machine age has during the past century produced the following new conditions with regard to population: the inhabitants of the earth have increased prodigiously in number; they are grouped in compact and specialized masses around the sources of labor and the industrial centers which have led to their growth.

The older nations existed within a frame that was intended for much smaller populations, doing much less specialized work, distributed in a less artificial and confining manner over a proportionately greater territory, and enjoying, if not more abundant resources, surely more flexible and varied ones; these older nations had grown up slowly, in the illusion of a fixed society and on the theory that a definite scale of values would be maintained. Suddenly this old framework had to bear the brunt of the new mass-life. The new masses immediately began to chafe under the old barriers, which resisted and constricted them. Whence resulted a

widely felt and profound uneasiness. The masses found themselves in a position of protest or even revolt against the old systems which once preserved order and a traditional culture. Thus socialism spread, working as it did for the breakdown or the modification of the old régime. And nowadays communism no longer stops at demanding reforms in the name of justice or humanity; it announces the exclusive authority of the mass, heralds it as guardian of all right, all power and all virtue.

Now in the United States no serious conflict could possibly take place between the new mass forms and a preëstablished order. The systems that took form were in any case very flexible, and as the mass forms arose, gave no considerable impediment to their growth and expansion, and in the end were easily merged with them.

The United States came into being at approximately the same time that mass economics was born. It was a country in process of being discovered, of boundless extent, astonishingly rich and fertile, and able to absorb without danger of unemployment or crowding the populations which the too rigid frames of the old world could not hold; it was a country whose social regulations were com-

posed merely of the rude colonial policing and an Anglo-Saxon morality of a wholly practical nature; it was a country, in short, whose restrictions were few, but pitiless, because so brutally necessary to the general welfare.

American civilization, then, began to take form as a civilization of the mass, by the mass, and for the mass, without any preconceived plan, without any traditions to overcome, without any tyrannical oppression to fight, and with a perfectly natural development.

This living mass which was to fill the United States was recruited from among persecuted and unfortunate people all over the world. In constructing its civilization the mass would naturally try to do away with political restrictions above all and emphasize the right to personal well-being at all costs.

The memory, although already dimmed, of persecution, tyranny, injustice suffered, has left in the soul of every American family and every immigrant an impassioned love for moral independence, an instinctive revulsion against the rule of a system, so that the idea of state socialism, or authoritarianism after the Roman fashion, arouses suspicion

and defiance. Hence these traits, deeply inbred in the American mind: antipathy toward theories and theorists, all theory being bound up in his mind with dogmatism, otherwise known as intolerance; enthusiasm for practical activity, so long as the activity is such as divides men as little as possible. The spirit of money-making thus becomes with Americans a guaranty of tolerance. And it is one of the reasons why money is not hateful to the mobs of immigrants.

But immigrants aspired as much after well-being as after liberty. Ravaged by misfortune, crushed with poverty, humiliated by want and nakedness, they had come to know that nothing in the world was so worth having as that human dignity whose first condition is material comfort. To have the run of a house, to sleep in a good bed, wear decent clothes, be able to keep clean, to eat when you are hungry, to enjoy a few diversions, these are the elementary desires of the man who works. Now America, by her very nature and evolution, tends to be very much harder on parasites than Europe. Hence the American because he is compelled to be a hard worker and is well repaid for his toil, comes to demand as the very basis of his social life that

scale of human comfort which is the minimum required by human dignity.

This passion for physical comfort did not manifest itself in haphazard, or occasional demands. It represented the simultaneous and collective need of a ceaselessly growing mass, which as it increased in number also grew in buying power—ideal conditions, then, for producers. And so in response to the clamor of its major clientèle, American industry came to create the "standardized" product, which is the common article that everybody wants and that everybody, by working, can pay for.

The marked taste for moral liberty, the cult of practical activity, work seen as economically and socially inescapable, and "standardization" in production and consumption,—such are the positive and major qualities of the American system. The undeniable, the significant lift that has been given to the self-respect of the average man is an outstanding result. Putting aside for the moment all theory and prejudice, may we not say that America under a system of free capitalism has already realized the more immediate aims which were vaguely put forth by socialism? And indeed, I ask, what collectivism, what communism, is there to be

found in the whole world that is more real than "standardization?"

V. THE "YOUTHFULNESS" OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

We cannot venture very accurately, as yet, to predict what will be the value and staying-power of this form of civilization. Let us limit ourselves to pointing out the new qualities or instruments it grants to men, and also those older ones which in its present state, it is powerless to retain. . . .

The chief qualities of American civilization are surely those of youth, *élan* and broad-mindedness.

Who does not speak of the youthfulness of the American people? Certain travelers even remark on what they call their "childishness." At all events youthfulness seems to be regarded as one of the specifically American traits.

Generally the following reasons for this are given: the population of the United States was recruited from among the hardier types; it has absorbed a vast multitude of immigrants, nearly all of whom were young; it has enjoyed a vigorous physical training, first due to the severity of the climate and then to the continued popularity

of sports. These reasons have perhaps only a superficial value. In the first place, pioneers or settlers make their fortunes, grow old and leave behind them a "softened" progeny. Again, the last human layers provided by immigration, coming from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, represent such a poor "selection" that the Americans themselves have come to consider this influx dangerous to their physical equilibrium. As for sports they only play an important part socially, where they are not a pleasure, but a necessity.

If, as is often found, the original conditions of an environment tend to favor a certain type of civilization, it is none the less true that this type of civilization, in turn, determines the human type. The civilization of the United States tends to create a youthful type, because it demands youth inexorably of whosoever wishes to gain his living and survive in it. Study American society in its offices, factories, homes, or in the streets of Chicago, or Kansas City, or in the Texas ranges, or the forests of Oregon, in church-circle or dance-palace. You will see that its atmosphere and rhythm is absolutely incompatible with old-age. Old age implies retiring within the self, a dislike for

trouble or risk, a passive resignation to the spectacle of life, the tendency in general to play the spectator rather than the actor.

In such a society, a man, no matter who he is or what he represents, only counts, or is only liked or respected so long as he remains "efficient." If he cannot acquire or keep the youthful vigor which is necessary to "efficiency," he must disappear. The instinct of self-preservation, finding no decent prospects in the kind of passive happiness which "retirement" involves, flings itself upon the side of the active life-force. Wholly dominated as it is by economic law, demanding eternal competition and eternal renewal, the American society forgives not any man for his age, excuses no one from the rigors of competition and renovation. Ford himself, at the end of his marvelous career, must begin again. . . .

There is an extraordinary contrast between the notion of youth in America and that in the old nations of Europe, especially in Latin countries. In Europe, youth is a passing luxury, which is of little consequence,—and often for the popular imagination takes on a silly and "juvenile" air. You don't "count" really until the day comes round

when you are no longer young. In America, youth, the ability to move fast, to work and to be enterprising—that is the daily bread. Hence, the smaller importance that Americans have up to recently attributed to sex questions, which in Europe form the chief concern of young people. We shall see, further on, how in this respect American morals have led to certain dangers. . . .

We like to divide the human race into old and young nations. In reality there are no old nations and no young ones. There are peoples whose social constitution leads them to cultivate the air of youth, and others who favor the attitudes of old age. The same Chinaman whom you would have taken in Pekin for a phantom, come up from buried centuries, would appear verdant and bourgeoning to you in San Francisco or Boston. The poor Jew, departed but recently from some sordid village of Eastern Europe, marked with the premature signs of age, will astound you with his vim and his cleanliness along the banks of the Hudson, or the Mississippi. . . . This is a tremendous lesson which the American example teaches us: the ease with which supposedly old races may be rejuvenated, when transplanted into a new mode

of life. It is an example from which we may derive new springs of hope for all humanity!

VI. THE EFFECTS OF SPACE

The same law of free and incessant competition which is the secret of American youthfulness, sustains the driving-force of Americans, and sharpens their taste for new risks and enterprises. But another all-important influence enters into play here: it is the effect of space.

All our historical experience shows us that the acquisition of new territory, whether by conquest, discovery or reclamation, spurs the initiative of a people and fires it to more powerful efforts. On the other hand, the too great fixity of the territorial frame over a long period results in signs of old age, of which the most lamentable is the wasting of time over political squabbles. From this point of view we cannot but be convinced that colonial expansion has been exercising a wholesome influence on European civilization ever since the Renaissance. The spirit of the United States suggests a kind of second-blooming of the colonial spirit. The passion for "virgin soil," for "new opportunities" is deeply rooted in the Ameri-

can psychology. The appeal of space, the herculean or heroic efforts and struggles it involves, are the springs of the American spirit.

Now it is time for us to ask ourselves whether a civilization of the modern type, dependent on economic progress and functioning principally in order to satisfy mass needs does not require far more space than older civilizations did, in order to attain its highest usefulness. Nations whose life unrolls or is maintained within well-defined political boundaries, or is kept stable by hallowed traditions, may content themselves with narrow or relatively narrow borders. But once there has been a diffusion of increasing prosperity and artificial comfort,—or as soon as this becomes the very object of a civilization—is not the whole nature of the problem altered? Henceforth the mass-problems can only be solved by standardized production, which supposes an ever larger consuming public and space for unlimited, unhampered traffic.

In this respect the United States represents the most advanced type of economic society, as much by the sweep of her territory as by the enfeeblement of her political system.

It has often been remarked that the citizens of the United States happen to have the good fortune of being able to exploit a whole continent. The success of their civilization depends to such a degree upon this fact alone that if their territory should be cut off in parts, or split up into fragments, the American society in its present form could not bear the strain for long, and political necessities would for the time being take preeminence over economic interests.

This observation may yield important reflections upon Europe as well. Europe is condemned to suffer from political problems because of her *fragmentation*, because of her many and narrow national borders, and the impossibility of satisfying conflicting interests in a too constricted field of action. Constant discord results in constant recourse to political arbitration. At the present time the struggle is plainly between the historical status of Europe and the necessity for her economic development, the crying need for economic balance. If Europe continues in a state of fragmentation, on historical grounds, she may remain of course a cradle of civilization, of creative and inventive effort, but she will have more and more difficulty

in following America in the path of universalized "efficiency" and material prosperity. Already the two types of civilization are ranging themselves against each other: the European type, of personal imagination or invention and individual well-being; and the American type of initiative (which is quite different from inventiveness) and of social well-being. One may prefer one type or the other. But if we consider the ends of civilization in the light of mass needs, and on the other hand the tendency of capitalism itself toward a form which is more and more collectivistic and impersonal, we must acknowledge that during the present cycle the American type has the better chance to win out.

VII. "HUMANITY" OF AMERICA

How many times has it not been said that civilizations which were directed toward material progress only were always the most brutal, the most cynical of all, and the most indifferent to human rights. Whereas the American model, after so many examples from history, really gives striking proof that the contrary is true. Admittedly the police in the United States are "hard-boiled"; true

enough, the relations of man to man are not touched up with any excess courtesies and refinements; and doubtless, in such a monstrous agglomeration, and in so vast a territory, vice and violence may flourish. But all in all, what people is really more humane than the American, if we mean by "humanity" the moral sympathy and succour which is always proffered to one's fellow man? The American may do homage to no other law in the world than that of "efficiency" and work, and exempt no one from this rule; but for this very reason the unfortunate creatures who can do no work stir his sympathies and gain his aid easily. Let us not forget that the finest aspect shown by America during the war was her charity.

Here, before going on to describe the blind-spots and the dangers of the American system, let us touch on her points of true greatness. Youth, *élan*, the genius for enterprise—they are the attributes which chance has brought, or products of a great effort; they do not form the basis for an ideal. If America possessed only these qualities, her penetration throughout the world would after all have been slight. But she does seem to us authentic, and leader of the world, through the new concep-

tions of human dignity which she has carried out.

How can we explain her enormous absorption in the question of human dignity?

It would be impossible, of course, to overlook a most important contributing cause, which is the fact that the American people, in large part, are composed of those who have fled from Europe for the sake of independence and self-preservation. But to my mind there is a deeper and more comprehensive cause. It is that the American form of civilization took shape and grew up as if at one breath, with one sustained effort, and so there were no successive layers of political and social classes; no spirit of privilege, caste or hereditary advantage came into existence. Only work and opportunity count for anything in the long run. One might as well say that only the man alone, the stuff in him, counts. Here is another and more decisive reason why wealth in America does not arouse hatred: created by the individual, it is accessible to all individuals. Political traditions and privileged orders may offer certain advantage for a people; but they also offer certain inconveniences. The American owes his humanity and tolerance toward his fellow man to the fact that he grew

up without any such distinctions or hierarchies within the body politic.

Although such superior and privileged orders do not exist, there is no want of moral education. No one can deny the "Puritans" their glory of having first proved that a society can get along successfully without any fixed rules, save those of moral education. America is the land of "moralizers." All religious sects, all the associations, all the forms of collective life that are not absorbed by "business," join in the great work of serving morality and the cult of human "efficiency." Individualism does not show itself, as with the Latin people, by dissent from the general practice, on the part of the individual,—a negative individualism,—but on the contrary by the cultivation, the encouragement of those qualities in individuals which would offer the greatest advantage, the best chances for all.

The extremely delicate problem of the colored races in America cannot of course be excluded from consideration. I have no idea as to how much the colored races may disturb the future of the United States. But for the moment what appears most striking is the manner in which the American

society has "canalized" them, that is, has used them without destroying them.

VIII. THE INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC DILEMMA

Despite the great innovations and the original methods which America has brought to the social domain, she remains passive so far as the arts and the purely intellectual pursuits are concerned. To be sure there are artists, writers, scientists, and "groups of serious thinkers." Nor is their accomplishment meager, or wanting, either in quantity or quality. The United States, at the present time, appears to have one of the most interesting schools of novelists in the world. . . . But as far as the whole mass of Americans is concerned intellectual activities seem to have little force or penetration. This mass even when found in the schools or universities seems to be insensitive to what we call "personal creativeness" and "higher culture."

Such a condition is not as easy to explain as one might be led to believe. It would be a mistake to ascribe it to the native lack of imagination, or want of ingenuity, or inexperience typical of younger nations. Even if they lacked æsthetic or intellectual imaginativeness the American people could have

acquired these traits from the influx of numberless immigrants out of the Mediterranean countries, continental Europe, or even out of the East. As for American ingenuity—it is not lacking in all those instances where the needs of the mass must be answered. Nor can we accuse a people of intellectual infancy when it has for a long time boasted the most numerous and populous universities, the richest and largest libraries, laboratories, the most widespread and diversified magazines and newspapers!

We must note also that indifference or even repugnance to original and creative work, to "intellectual risks," in general, shows itself to a surprising extent in the American exactly when he seems to have well-nigh unlimited opportunities at his command.

This is the case with American industry, unexcelled in the size of its operations, its power of production, and its adjustment to collective needs, but inexpert at changing and renewing its types.

It is the trouble with American architecture, with the American cinema. . . . Never before in history, and never again, perhaps, will architecture find such opportunities as have been offered in the

last forty years by the fantastic soarings of mass-life in America. Never have so many great cities been built in so short a time, with such abundant credit, material, profits. Never in the heart of cities have so many buildings of all kinds been so swiftly torn down and replaced. Never have houses lasted so short a time. For even less than it tolerates old age in men, does American morality tolerate old age in buildings. One dreams of titanic monuments such as a Michel Angelo could have imagined, of harmonies in stone such as Mansart would have conceived, of the elaborate and grandiose forms that the builders of the cathedrals would have invented.

Yet, out of this ocean of material that is still tremulous under the American tempest, nothing of veritable originality has emerged as yet. The "skyscraper" has just missed being the great creation we hoped it would be. Its subjection to the immediate necessities of the crowd and to the dogma of "maximum commercial return" has deprived it of that margin of surplus or *non-useful* (i.e. artistic) quality, with which it might have given us authentic and unheard of effects of beauty. In order to decorate the skyscraper, Amer-

ican architects superimpose layers of European or exotic style. If the horizon of skyscrapers in Chicago or New York achieves at times the effects of a magnificent poetry, is it not due less to the calculations of architects than to the splendors of the setting sun? . . . All this is equally true of the cinema. Tens, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on the films, and not a single original element emerges from them, save, perhaps, certain moments in the play of artificial light.

IX. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STANDARDIZATION AND CREATIVE ORIGINALITY

The cause? Ah, that is the great question. . . . Working within the mass system, with the sole driving-force of making quick profits—for all America undertakes ventures and builds on credit —the American hearkens only to the needs of the mass, stimulates or exaggerates them, but never anticipates or modifies them. He rejects from his sphere of interest any project or experiment that may not "pay." Now, the creative or original effort involves at least a fifty-fifty chance of failure: it may go wrong through causes of its own; it may not interest the crowd; it may even offend the

crowd. A "temple to the cinema" may be decorated with well-known and recognized works of art, long ago labeled and docketed, made popular, vulgarized; but not a dollar will be spent in order to include one new native work.

The "standardized" civilization may be said to incur great dangers from this source. Although mass needs and tastes may assure an object of common utility success, popularity or profit, in the matter of art, taste varies constantly and utility means little. Thus creative genius is baffled or disarmed by the force of a human mass whose manner of living excludes artistic education or taste.

Here, then, is a problem for modern mankind that cannot be passed up for long without great loss. Is not the purpose and the scope of mass civilization limited by the low stage of culture and the terribly physical needs of that mass? In other words, can the mass ever become intellectually detached enough, or curious enough, in the noblest sense, to encourage and support the creation of works of art which have no immediate utility?

The problem is not to be solved by sending people to school, as one may see from the state of American education. It will not be solved by

propaganda for education, since that too is easily "standardized" and submits to the known tastes of the mass. Already American literature and criticism are on the road to being "standardized": and the standard is not established at the level of great and original art, but at the considerably lower one of common preference, the "public taste."

We must either await an inevitable decline in artistic creation and "pure" thinking, or we must issue from the blind-alley through an effort on the part of the artists and intellectuals themselves. For the economic mass follows its own law of growth, a wholly materialistic one, and will never give ground. . . .

Art and intellectual creation, as we have conceived them up to now, involve spiritual meditation, intensity of effort, and the pursuit of lasting values. These qualities still jealously adhered to by a devout cult, correspond in no way with the essential rhythms of modern mass-movements.

Modern life seems to demand action rather than reflection, speed or practical "efficiency" rather than depth, constant and lightning-like changes rather than enduring qualities. An American would be mistaken to build for eternity, knowing that

his whole structure would fall about him in five or ten years under the blows of new circumstances, and be replaced by another. And all those "comforts," those objects of immediate utility, if art refuse them, very well then, he will obtain them through industrial standardization. He will not sacrifice necessity to originality. It is fated, then, that art adapt itself or disappear. All of European tradition rebels at this. But might it not be better to save art by incorporating it with industry? . . . America has not worried about this problem very much so far. Will Europe find the solution for it in time?

The dilemma is scarcely different for the intellectual class in general. It has long been proclaimed that the scientist or philosopher should live apart from the herd, like a hermit or a moral refugee. But this was only a confusing of loneliness with objectivity. For speculation in the realm of thought it is enough that one be simply disinterested or objective. The modern masses are not closed to ideas, but they want them and understand them only within the limits of their own experience or of their most constant and vital preoccupations. The problem is not to level all thought down to

mass tendencies; but to answer the questions posed by the masses. If the pure scientist or philosopher who is capable of originality and leadership refuse to answer, then some slave to the crowd, some low journalist or venal politician, avid of popularity and profit, will answer instead.

And for that matter, it is for the artists, scientists, philosophers to realize that in this world that is ruled by speed and mass mechanics, the whole scale, design and harmony of things is no longer quite the same as it was in the more composed world of yesterday.

X. IN QUEST OF A UNIFYING PRINCIPLE

Even if the artists and scientists adapt themselves to the exigencies of mass civilization they cannot do without the inspirational force of some ideal, some pure and disinterested longing, which heartens their efforts and repays their sacrifices. But there is no high disinterestedness, no fruitful idealism possible which can be separated from the social order. Extreme individualism, in art and thought, as in so many other fields, ends up in an excessive egoism, in sterility. And so we approach another aspect of the American problem, with which the future of

art and thought is intimately bound up: it is the question of the collective conscience, or of unity.

It has been observed that although one rarely finds beauty directly, as a culminating effort, in the United States, one encounters everywhere a kind of strewn and scattered beauty, the beauty of nature in a lavish mood, of youth in full triumph, beauty even in those structures which taken singly are so disappointing, but ranged or massed together seem to express a mighty lyricism of matter. What must be done that all this scattered beauty may be gathered together and crystallized? To attain such a state there must not only be the recognition of group needs, there must be a collective ideal, the consciousness of a veritable unity.

Unity. . . . The world is sick for unity. Europe, Asia, America, each in turn longs for unity after her fashion. In this great travail with which the whole earth is racked, America presents a strange and paradoxical figure. Apparently the people of the United States have no call to be nationalistic, since they are not in the true sense a nation; nor to long for unity, since they happen

to be marvelously unified. Yet they dream strangely of unity and speak in the accents of nationalism.

This double paradox points, for us, in the same direction: the American people are in quest of a unifying principle. Their territorial unity was gained too quickly and preserved with too little struggle for a sense of moral unity to have emerged as the result of immense efforts and ordeals undergone together. A national attitude, a national way of understanding and expressing things, which is nothing but a kind of collective pride, tend to correct such defects of origin.

But nationalism is an irrational and dangerous course for the American people. Irrational, because it corresponds to no particular realities or needs felt in the United States. For America does not have to defend or enhance her racial prestige, since she does not possess this. Nor does she have to protect her power, which no one questions or threatens.

Nationalism is dangerous, because far from hastening unification it would be more likely to impede or compromise it. It would tend inevitably to replace the economic system with a political

order, which would change the nature of American society. Such a change of system would shake the very foundations of her social solidarity. The United States is too diverse in its complexion for the confinement and the rigidity of a severe national discipline. Already her intervention in the European war has caused, in retrospect, a long shudder of doubt. And indeed, how can such varying interests as those of Texas and Illinois, of Boston and San Diego, of New York and New Orleans be reconciled for long to a common theory and practice of nationalism?

The great collective units of the modern world, dependent as they are on economic interaction, and therefore on freedom from intervention by the State, will have more and more trouble in complying with the demands of nationalism. The British Empire is already an example of this state of affairs. Anxiety for her far-flung empire and the mortal dangers which its break-up would entail, force her to continue the struggle for naval supremacy. But the United States has no such anxiety. . . . An American nationalism created out of whole cloth would imperil the very basis of her power.

The United States, then, must seek her spirit of unity in the perfection of the type of society which she has created. What remains to be judged is whether this type of society, through the particular changes in human morals that it involves, does not bear within itself seeds of evil that may threaten its own existence.

CHAPTER SIX

MORALS

I. THE LACK OF A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

EVERY European who has sojourned only a week in the United States gathers enough anecdotes, evidence or data on American ways of living to convince him of the "difference of environment." However, it is all too banal to contrast certain "smart" or rather shrewd ways which are deemed characteristically "American" with the subtler manners of the old world. It is much more difficult to penetrate below the surface and arrive at sound observations or analysis. And what is most difficult of all for the foreign visitor to understand is the social make-up of the United States.

Conventional methods of judgment are here ineffectual. No historical or traditional background of any general or permanent value what-

soever is to be detected. There is no political heritage or "aristocracy" that has given off "human secretions" during generations. There is no structure that has resulted even from geographical influences: for it would be silly to apply the theory of the effects of environment, climate, etc., to the very homogeneous ensemble of social fact that may be observed over a stretch of territory as varied (geographically) as the United States. But the very absence of historical and social pedigree should serve to indicate to us the particular novelty of the situation.

In Europe the social make-up of each nation is produced by its history. There is always, more or less clearly defined, a hierarchy or an aristocracy in the social order harking back to a series of historical events. These events have been the successive changes in property ownership, the overthrow of forms of government, successive renovations of the civil administration and its personnel, all separate phases in the economic evolution of the country. In France, for instance, one may still easily distinguish the different "layers" that date from the Old Régime, the Napoleonic era, those that were brought into existence by the rise of

industry and the spread of petty trade throughout the country, those that followed the spread of democratic institutions to the small towns and villages, and those finally that represent the most recent convulsions and speculations. Each layer or stratum comprises certain traditions, prejudices, emotional or mental habits. . . . These various layers constitute an extremely complex but coherent whole.

Besides, up to the last war, Europe did not experience her economic revolutions in the form of sudden and violent cataclysms. The curve of progress or prosperity had followed a more or less rapid ascent; but at all events, regular, deliberate, outdoing and superseding the older classes of society, in a most gradual way,—that is, without extinguishing them suddenly. . . .

Prior to that series of monetary earth-tremors which razed so many fortunes, most of the social strongholds in Europe still reposed on inherited rights and property. Private fortunes and estates running back at least two or three generations were far more numerous and powerful than newly made fortunes. This *bloc* of inherited fortunes holding to positions acquired, fortified the existing

social order against the "equalitarian" assaults, determined what conventions there were to be, regulated the rate with which newcomers were admitted, assured a certain privilege to graded or traditional merit, and at any rate marked a gap between the honored rich and the *nouveaux riches*.

In the United States, on the other hand, nothing of this kind has existed or has influenced the social order very markedly. Amid the vast flood of private fortunes, the heirlooms or the estates, guarded and honored through time, mean little. The very customs of the social *milieu* oppose such a stabilization of private fortunes. Up to recently the savings bank was unpopular in the United States; it had to be artificially introduced and encouraged by certain bankers. Whoever did not spend all his earnings reinvested them in new ventures. The speedy rotation and the fickleness of economic chance is such that no fortune can long resist by its own weight the inroads of competition. And since Americans love to gamble, they show more dash in undertaking risks than prudence in avoiding them.

Even if private fortunes were more stable, the

area and scope of the United States would militate against the establishment of some social fixation. When we study the social make-up of a European State we deal with fixed conditions and a framework that has certain limits. In America, to be sure, great private fortunes built up, let us say, in Chicago, St. Louis, or Kansas City, are known and established. But although such and such a company or corporation may extend its ramifications throughout the whole country, isolated individuals, no matter how unimaginably rich they may be, cannot spread their own direct influence over the same surface. Wealth in America, wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, remains wealth and nothing more; it retains a purely economic prestige. Whence it results that one never knows precisely who sets the tone of society now or if the mode you take up to-morrow as the "smart thing" be not the creation of some clever business man.

Finding no solid props in the social *milieu,* should one look for them among the "nobility," those who bespeak a certain personal authority by virtue of their origin or their individual attainments? There are families, to be sure, whose name all the world knows, men who are renowned or

widely respected. But how many are they, and do they have any weight? Are there more than twenty or thirty families which are known throughout the United States? Are there more than a few dozen men of national fame for these hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants and these millions of square miles? As a matter of fact a resident of New York knows far less about the influential "circles" of Seattle, or of Baltimore and reciprocally, than a Londoner or a Genevese knows of Parisian society. Nor can you, in the United States, depend upon the traditions of a rural district or of a "small town," since they are often of more recent growth than the great urban centers. In fact fortune and "position" in those places belong quite often to immigrants of rather recent vintage, who aside from their business have no particular roots or attachments to their place of settlement.

II. THE OBLIGATION TO "MAKE MONEY"

In truth, to understand America we must always bear this fact in mind: that the social structure of the United States does not compose a unified historical nation, nor a body politic; it is a community of purely economic origin. The social tie exists

only through the economic one; in other words, through the interaction and interdependence of collective groups, or of individuals, equally embraced within the cycle of work and profit.

Hence the obligation to "make money," which is the very basis of American morals. This obligation which is the supreme end of social life in America often seems gross to Europeans. But in reality it has a much broader and more complex meaning than is usually given to it. The European covets money fully as much as the American. But he considers money-making as a matter of individual chance. Such chance will procure him pleasures and satisfactions other than money, and of a personal nature. Avarice itself, so frequently noted in the European bourgeois, is a characteristic of individualism.

The American, on the other hand, conceives of money-making as the sole end and motive of social relations: he does not really believe that his earnings do not concern the society in which he lives, or that society can have any more real object than to favor the earning-power of its citizens. And so we have as a special consequence of this the fact that wealth in the United States is sym-

pathetic to society as a whole, and society sympathetic to wealth.

America was for a long time a land where neither pleasure nor agreeable leisure existed, where a man could not justify his existence to himself or to others save by making money. Even to-day America seems to make the enjoyment of prolonged idleness irksome and embarrassing. It is scarcely astonishing, then, if all social relations organize themselves almost solely for the pursuit of gain.

If you put restraints upon men who have come to live upon a new territory in order to earn money and only for that, there are two possible consequences. In the first case, either no police exists as yet or exists only loosely: in which case you have a society of adventure and battle and sudden death. Or in the second case, the police get the upper-hand and become merciless: whereupon you have a society which adjusts itself in a rigorous, orderly and deliberate manner to its economic ends—in fine, contemporary America, the child of the vigorous and severe colonialism of New England. The obligation to "make money" observed under the protection of a powerful police, will always

engender in the case of men who are devoid of prejudice and indifferent to questions of ideas, the maximum degree of material "efficiency" and collective well-being.

How does the morality of the country suffer from all this? It is enough to answer that the gospel of "making money" has developed here the most preachy, the most "moral" people in the world.

At bottom "making money" is nothing other than "earning a living," and therefore an effort to ameliorate the conditions of living is bound to result in a country where the material needs are both imperative and costly. Who could protest against so healthy a tendency? True, every man who feels concern for the moral progress of civilization believes that the importance of money should not overweigh the importance of personal merit. And there is often just complaint that the controllers of money abuse their power, either corrupting themselves or depraving others. But it is strangely true that the insolence and the vice resulting from abuse of wealth are much less apparent in the United States than elsewhere: first, because there are so few fortunes acquired solely through inheritance and involving no personal

merit whatsoever; and then, because fortune in a *milieu* sympathetic to it is satisfied in its own proper development and does not seek conservation beyond its proper limits; finally, because wealth being neither denounced, nor so often a menace, need not resort so frequently to "insuring itself" through corrupt practices.

The dominant and sometimes crushing obligation to make money makes it necessary for the individual to get the utmost "return" at every stage and for everything he does. For the group as a whole it assures the adjustment of social relations to the demands of the collective prosperity. Under the sway of this creed the American, then, becomes a being whose active principle is to "make money" above all, one who devotes his energies and the energies of others to this sole end, and who approves or disapproves of all public measures in accordance with their furthering business ends. And so society lives, develops and renews itself always with this aim of making production and consumption more profitable to each and every one.

Morality is not directly affected by all this. But the duty to "make money" and to be efficient in

a material sense, accepted as the gospel, reacts upon customs, and changing them little by little, transforms morality too. Here we touch the Achilles' heel of the American colossus.

III. THE AMERICAN CONCEPTION OF LIFE

In order to study American customs profitably we must observe how the obsession with money-making influences the whole meaning and idea of life in the individual, his dealings with other men, and the morale or well-being of his family.

The particular effects on the American's conception of life are noticeable at first glance.

The principle of getting rich and getting-rich-quick establishes the whole scale of values and affects even the daily speech and imagination of the average American. For him the country is not "the country" but the place where wheat, corn, cotton, even real-estate is raised; a river is not a "river" properly, but a means of transportation, or a source of hydro-electric power; a journey is not made for the purpose of "traveling," but becomes a useful removal; friendship is not merely "friendship," but a matter of mutual service. . . . Thus a theater is not supposed to bother about art, but to

pay dividends to its stockholders. The solidity of a house, or the æsthetic appeal of a skyscraper matter little; what is paramount is that as a business operation the house or skyscraper "pay" in the briefest possible time.

This way of understanding life and ranging values produces certain disorders,—even economic ones!—which the United States is beginning to suffer from.

Socially it is the cause of that crudeness for which the people on the other side of the Atlantic are commonly reproached. But the American is not coarse. He is very humane, as I have said before. He has even certain charming gifts of delicacy. But as a social being, the American is a man who "works fast," who seldom shows finesse, and blunders rather often into scrapes, which he is at any rate able to get out of with some spirit and much good humor. His devouring ambition is to get to the end of an affair quickly, and to make a lasting or profound effect is a lesser consideration with him.

It is for such reasons that America represents completely that type of civilization which M. Paul Valéry called the *quantity* civilization. But we

shall have occasion to show that to a certain extent, quantity cannot get along very well without quality.

IV. RELATIONS OF MAN TO MAN

It is self-evident, after all, that the American system would not have come to occupy a virtually dominant position among the peoples, if there were not some principle of *quality* nourished in the bosom of it. Where shall we find it? We must search for it, undoubtedly, in the moral education which determines the relations of man to man in the United States.

At bottom, human sentiments are alike all over the world. No one can claim that there is any difference between the selfishness of a European and that of an American, or that on either side of the Atlantic human beings treat each other with any greater generosity. It is simply that the egoism of Europeans is more devious and flexible, while that of Americans is more trenchant and brusque.

In this wise Europe reflects the advantages of her harmonious diversity and refinement; America the limitations of her bleak uniformity.

The "contacts" of a European are begun and

extended along the lines of family ties, mental or temperamental attunements, chance meetings, attachments through common memories, advancement in one's profession and the extension of one's interests. They seem a kind of crazy scrap-book, representing nevertheless bonds of individual education, temperament and taste, in accordance with a more or less complex culture, rather than a definite set of social (*vide*, economic) relations. A cultivated person gathers about him certain associations or associates, and their variety derives from the nuances or shades in his culture. It is only to a limited degree that the professional element enters into play.

In the United States, however, almost the exact contrary is the case. It is the circle of economic or financial associations that fixes a man's social circle, that determines in fact the relations of individuals. A banker "sees" his clients, executives, stockholders, the promoters or investors with whom his bank "works." His social life depends on his business life, and his friends are drawn from his business contacts. Whenever circumstances separate him or throw him outside of his business circle, he no longer "counts" for his old friends

and old acquaintances. But if he penetrates into some other circle he may immediately enjoy there, under the strict obligation to return the favors, its particular advantages and relationships, no matter what his origin or creed may be.

From this you may well imagine that friendship in the old sense is somewhat rare in America, that social relations are first of all business relations, and that every good American belongs or hopes to get into a circle, a club, an association, or a "fraternity. . . ."

The obsession with money-making plays a decisive rôle in all this. But there is also the effect of space and of immigration to be seen. The great space which the citizens of the United States have to move around in and in which they are constantly on the move—for you may find the same man established one year in Chicago, another in Saint Louis, a little later in Providence—makes it impossible for the American to see any other social value than that which is derived from his business circles. He may be socially attractive, but since no one is sure about his past or his future, people generally hold themselves to judging him on his present value. To-morrow if he changes his

city or his post, his old acquaintances, no longer having the time or the inclination to keep in touch with him, will no longer know him. . . . Such exclusive insistence on the present references of a man as characterizes the business and social life of American cities, great and small, certainly shows common sense in a human family composed of immigrants of all kinds.

In America you meet as many, if not more people who claim to be of princely, aristocratic or distinguished family, than anywhere else under the sun. But since there is no way of checking up on their titles, or pedigrees, people look up their bank credit,—which is quicker and more to the point. The gospel of money-making and the certification of a man's social standing by his bank-account is certainly a far cry from the social and worldly niceties of Europe. In this system the American finds security for his work and his profit. Once he is clear of danger, he gives free rein to his social moralism, or one might well say, to his moral socialism.

America contains in herself great moral and social potentialities whose astonishing force, mixed though they are with absurdity and abuse,

it would be stupid to underrate. For having misjudged it Europeans have suffered many disappointments. Germany, for instance, during the war. And in another sense the people who did not understand from the very beginning the seriousness of Prohibition. Many stories could be told about the way in which the Prohibitionist campaigns were conducted and the combined influences that led to their success. But the great lesson of it all is not to be found in the funny stories and hocus-pocus associated with Prohibition. The outstanding fact is that a nation of 120,000,000 souls overnight learns to accept such a law, which is held to suppress in some measure a normal human need. Such a fact which has no precedent of equal magnitude in all history, is evidence of a collective disposition toward moral and social "fanaticism." Sometimes it takes passive form—manifesting itself in the kind of submission here spoken of—and at other times it becomes active, in the shape of thousands of sects, clubs, and sermonizing institutions for the advancement of moral causes which flourish nowhere in such bizarre and luxuriant varieties as upon American soil.

This tendency entails an advantage unknown to

Europe: it is the disposition and desire of each citizen to better the lot of all in a practical way. And the United States to-day seems to be the only large country whose inhabitants continually voice their satisfaction and love for the society to which they belong, whose improvement they all participate in whole-heartedly, and which on the whole—in a world rendered deeply pessimistic by racking social problems for the past hundred years—reveals a great social optimism. To be sure it is a social optimism that is grounded upon the advantages of a "new and rich" territory, and which expresses itself chiefly in the shape of moral propaganda and education.

Will it not be found that the moral education of Americans helps further the already brilliant results of the "regimentation" of labor? The Taylor System, the intensive use of machinery, high efficiency, far-sighted economics in office and factory—all that is very nice to hear and talk about. But examining it closely one sees no marvels of machinery or office-equipment in the United States that would permit men to work without getting tired, or produce without effort. On the contrary, one sees nearly everywhere, in all sorts of indus-

tries a certain excess of zeal in the workingman for his work, which Americans themselves call "love of service." To serve, to be useful: simply a slogan, a battle-cry, to work up morale, if you wish, but one which necessarily implies a powerful moral concept.

How extraordinary that this society devoted only to money-making and acknowledging only the law of profit, having neither native nor aristocratic traditions, and absorbing from all the other distressed lands a humiliated labor—far from favoring the exploitation of the weak by the strong—has constantly raised the dignity of the worker and increased his salary! Always, this is explained by all kinds of systems: that of a protective tariff, that of trade-unionism, of the rich consumer rendering the producer richer. . . . But in truth no system functions perfectly without the adherence and the whole-hearted efforts of the men who carry it out. And these ill-instructed men give their adherence not by a logical consensus of opinion (which for the most part they are incapable of), but with the *élan* of a moral rapture. When we see the labor organizations of the United States make agreements with employers and at times

outdo them in the interests of a better return for labor, we judge that their desire merely for higher wages is what determines their attitude. But how was it in the beginning? In the beginning, it needed something beyond the narrow and immediate interest of the wage-earner. It needed a kind of instruction (or inspiration) outside of the factory that had to act upon employer and employee at once.

And indeed, if you throw over the dull mass of statistics and "industrial reports" and go to see the American workers, of a certain age, those whose activity has determined the results we observe now, you will come away with the conviction that these workers possessed a full sense of the moral dignity of the laborer before obtaining for themselves the satisfactions of a material dignity.

V. THE MORAL STANDARD

This established, one is enabled all the better to understand how America has succeeded, at least on the surface and for the moment, in "deproletarizing" the masses, whereas Europe has not. Undoubtedly such a difference in result has numerous causes. But the primary cause is that American

democracy rouses the masses through moralizing, while European democracies fill up their cup of woe through their endless "intellectualizing" about public questions. The cult of psychology and of practical rules of life have shown themselves more efficacious than that of abstract knowledge and the passion for ideas. The social significance of the United States may be defined in a few words: freedom of ideas, uniformity (i.e., conformity), and dogmatism in morals. Morality, also, is "standardized."

The moral "standard" does not imply universal perfection. It may involve, in fact, either dissimulation, hypocrisy, or the fear of "seeing life steadily and seeing it whole"—vices swiftly disseminated since they spread by secret contagion—or, on the other hand, a reaction toward the eccentric. And the American scene does not lack eccentricity and hypocrisy. But up to now the "moral standard," at least on the surface and with regard to the respect it still commands, has not been dislodged.

Of course the whole "moral standard" has few terrors for those idle and errant Americans, who are the sons and daughters of "magnates" and who

amaze and entertain the world with the fantastic shifts they resort to and the trouble they have in adjusting their lives and keeping themselves busy. Nor is its influence more than slight upon the recent immigrants to great cities like Chicago and New York. But over the basic American population, that whole portion of the country whose views really color the collective attitude,—I mean the people of small and middle-sized towns, of the farming regions, the skilled and prosperous workers who are the fixed element in the industrial centers—over all these, the "moral standard" has a vast dominion. And the new laws restraining immigration, if they can but be maintained, will have the further effect of keeping this human layer stable, and permitting it to absorb newcomers slowly; so that the "standard" will still hold good, through the typical and dominating class of the country.

The "moral standard" is so powerful that it gives a common direction to all the religious sects and creeds.

Although according to certain statistics, some fifty million Americans declare that they belong to no organized church, the religious spirit has a

greater blooming in the United States than almost anywhere else. For religions as well as for human beings, America has the secret of rejuvenation. Though fifty million claim to have no religion, the others—which is to say, sixty or seventy millions!—are firmly attached to some church or religious cult. The Catholic Church, for example, which has between fifteen and twenty million adherents in the United States, can doubtless find nowhere in any European nation such a flock of faithful and docile believers. We know also that New York is the Jewish capital of the world, and in many more senses of the term than the merely statistical one.

It may seem paradoxical that the people most passionately in quest of physical well-being, most absorbed in the applied sciences, in short, the most "modern" people in the world, are so willing to accept influences of a religious nature. The main reason for this must be, that religion in the United States, reflecting the deeper preoccupations of its whole background, is more directly concerned with morality than with theological or dogmatic questions. Again, the very nature of this society detaches religion as much as possible from political

dissension. And besides, among a people who show above all a practical concern for the ultimate profits or returns, intellectualist criticism loses its force. The American may enjoy his little joke, but he hates mockery, especially when it is aimed at general beliefs. He holds Latin irony in horror; he fears it and it exasperates him. This is still a point on which Europeans commit many blunders. . . . All religion in the United States is oriented toward a practical morality.

No one questions the fact that to Puritans, or more generally speaking, to Protestantism, belongs credit for having founded the moral traditions of the United States. On this new and free terrain Protestantism could work and develop in a pure state, cleansed of the passions that surrounded its birth, and of the ties of personal interest or political advantage that had transformed its original motives, as in the case of England and Germany. Acting in perfect independence, it injected its two essential characteristics, little by little, into the very stuff of American society: individualism as regards opinions or ideas, and collectivism or conformity with regard to morals. On the other hand, living outside of the historical arena of religious

combats, having nothing to fear from a social and political body that was in accord with it, and thinking only of the permanent interests of a country in need of labor, hence of immigrants, American Protestantism could wisely practice the utmost tolerance. It could ignore differences of creed.

This tolerance toward other sects has aided powerfully in the development and perfection of mass civilization in America. It has encouraged a state of things without which such a form of civilization could not exist; that of free and peaceful competition between idealistic forces toward the practical maintenance of order. It has given birth to many different kinds of social props which, although apparently useless at first, have proven remarkably helpful as the evolution of the economic group brought on bigger and more complex problems. Thus to give only a partial example which helps to sum up the situation, it may be observed to-day that Puritanism tends to preserve the old framework of American society, Catholicism to defend the interests of the imperilled family, advanced Protestantism to devise moral adjustments suited to the needs of material prog-

ress, and Judaism to uphold the rules of economic "efficiency." . . .

In truth nothing testifies more convincingly to the great flowering of the mass civilization in America than does the rapid spread of religions in America. The spectacle of religious growth is never to be seen in aristocracies; it is always characteristic of the masses. For if the United States had evolved in the direction of a politically controlled society, rather than an economic one, her leaders would inevitably have prohibited religious liberty, which always offers danger for the political authority.

And so, far from being at odds with each other, the economic materialism and the religious "moralism" of America get on very well together. Healthy morals are the basic condition of good labor, just as a mainly practical outlook is the surest safeguard against intolerance in ideas.

Unfortunately the alliance between the money-making spirit and the spirit of morality has not provided for every possible emergency. And it has especially failed to divine that the terrible rhythms of mass economics would end by threatening the whole structure of the family.

VI. THE INSTABILITY OF THE FAMILY

The American family does not lend itself easily to systematic study. Not only do family habits vary widely in accordance with the particular region, but there are also the special effects of distance, climate, particular social traditions and tendencies, taking so many diverse forms that it would be well-nigh impossible to consider alike Creole families in Louisiana, Swedish ones in Wisconsin, a Roumanian family, let us say, in New York, a Mexican family in the South, and above all, the vexing problems presented by the "colored" families everywhere, black, yellow, red. . . .

Definite comments on this subject have generally had only a superficial bearing. Yet the broad movements into which the American family as a whole is drawn, seem clear enough to us. The material of the family in America is remarkably healthy; but the family structure itself seems to be getting rather shaky. Here is another paradox of the American scene: individual manners and morals—save for those of the great centers of population—are extremely regular, give way less

to passion or whim than anywhere else; and at the same time the whole institution of the family is undergoing the greatest upheavals!

To get around this apparent paradox we must ignore all such anecdotes and snap-judgments as Europeans love to bring back from the United States.

There is, in the first place, a common misconception about Americans that we must avoid: the American, much like the Englishman, pays great attention to his physical convenience and comfort, but naturally bred in a ruder school, does not feel any "plastic" or physical shame; his only pudency is, properly speaking, sexual, and on this ground he is extremely sensitive. We Latins, on the other hand, associate physical shame with sexual fear: sometimes we exaggerate one or the other, and sometimes we throw them both over. It is by applying a Latin yard-stick to American manners that so many mistaken notions are spread about the "daring" of Americans. If this view were correct, one would tend to conclude that morals were looser in Anglo-Saxon America than in Spanish or Central America! . . .

Everyone is well aware that the woman "com-

mands" in the United States. What is too little known is that this commanding position, though it procures woman liberties and material comforts, no longer assures her of sentimental contentment.

The American woman—in those old Northern "Colonies" where racial admixture was unknown, and where men long outnumbered women—enjoyed not only the traditional authority, respect, and protection assured by the law, but was sometimes better informed and almost always more cultivated than the man. There the young girl seems a strong and lovely person, whose candid and natural charm reflect health in the broadest sense of the term. Neither the woman nor the girl fear man, and if this fear had existed, co-education would have stamped it out. Beauty, health, freedom, superior culture, traditional authority, legal protection—all these advantages does the American woman have, save, perhaps, the sense of the romantic. Yet holding all these trump-cards, in marriage, it seems that she is no longer certain of keeping ahead of the game; it seems, even, that she often loses; that sometimes she no longer cares to play. . . . And among other phenomena we have the veritable epidemic of divorces, whose

infection, though not spread much beyond the wealthier classes, appears to be gaining little by little to the more modest ranks of society.

And for his part, the man worries or suffers. For it is probably true that he perceives the great misunderstanding sooner than the woman.

We must not overdo either the acuteness or the extent of this "struggle of the sexes." But it is none the less to be perceived as latent in all the present impulses of American social life. The very foundations and the future of America are threatened thereby.

In the eyes of the foreign observer there is an actual struggle being waged between man and woman over their respective share in social responsibilities and advantages. Driving man always in quest of profits, whipping him on to the killing pace of competition and "efficiency," ever mounting in their accelerating rhythm, the American mass civilization is infinitely harder on the man than on the woman.

The young man is reared in the gospel of "making money," is practically forced to devote himself to this from an early age. He has no leisure for dreams. His emotional faculties remain vague and

timid. He finds little occasion to "amuse himself" in the European sense. He has been taught to respect young girlhood. He marries early, "carried away" by a sudden attraction.

Once married to him, the woman demands her happiness. . . . In all countries where business is supreme, woman is secretly the rival of the "office," the "business," or the "factory" of her husband, and of all such prosaic, professional requirements as absorb the energy and the imagination of the male. Yet at the same time that she tries to detach her husband morally from the money-making obsession, she drives him back to it with her materialistic demands. She drives him to it again and again, because she herself is intoxicated by mounting wealth, by the luxury and pleasure which she especially has the time to enjoy. Always sensitive to the external vibrations, modes, fads of the *milieu,* she utilizes comforts and "spending" in a sort of flight toward freedom, since she is living in a land which for some time now has been intoxicated with good fortune and dazzled by the legends of splendor that emanate from the cinema paradise of Hollywood. . . . We must admit, then, that a society which is too exclusively

economic in its composition bodes ill for the family. The family-principle always involves, more or less, intimacy, constancy, thrift. But the swift rhythms of mass economics must end inevitably in the situation: husband and wife drifting apart in their interests; husband overworked, and wife extravagant. Thus the husband is forced to "produce" more and more in order to pay the expenses of a woman who is "consuming" more and more. Consumption, production, the one entailing and spurring on the other: this is the system that brings marvelous profits to industry—but for conjugal life it spells ruin.

Domestic stability?—How can there be any in an America where life has no deep roots, where the shocks and vibrations of monstrous cities are felt every day, where one is forced by the servant problem to take refuge in hotels and restaurants, to pursue the cruel round of economic chance? Instability is the ruling character of such an existence. In the domain of the sentiments as in that of architecture, all taste is soured for permanent values, for fixed and definite attachments.

Thus little by little the husband and wife tend

to dwell apart, morally and physically, almost without being aware of it. They have few points of contact. During the same leisure hours one of them goes to his club, while the other goes to a dance-palace, or skating-rink, or a swimming pool on the roof of the hotel. They only go out together, —strangely enough!—to "banquets," or dinners-out in the interests of business . . . until the day comes when the too frail thread of their sentiment for each other snaps. The family is indeed the moot question; it is verily the exposed flank of American civilization.

Man may invent and advance a civilization: he may supply the mechanism for it: but he cannot, alone, give it lasting life. It is woman who must provide the stability and the durable qualities of a people. The American woman will decide the future of the United States as a nation! Either her taste will run more and more to a wholly materialistic and surface existence, in which it must be admitted at any rate, that she cuts a very dashing figure: and then, sometime, twenty or thirty years after, a few "ordeals," a crisis, a defeat,—who knows?—and the moral fabric of this society will begin to fall apart irreparably. Or else, the

American woman will recoil from the money obsession and take interest in knowledge, the culture of the individual, of the intimate in sentiment and taste, thereby giving to Americans those qualities they lack: the sense for refinements, for enduring values, for continuity; in which case the United States need have nothing to fear for another century at any rate. Every great fortune must some day or other be defended by warriors. Now it is woman who makes warriors—not of course the woman who "consumes" all and whom advertisements flatter and shops fawn upon, but the woman who is also a "producer," the woman of veritable force, dear to the hearts of traditional moralists.

VII. THE PROBLEM OF THE CHILD IN AMERICA.

The "sex problem" of course is only important inasmuch as it determines the "child problem," which already offers extraordinary difficulties for American civilization. A too daring evolution in family customs would cause much more serious trouble in the United States than elsewhere.

The American child now occupies a most agreeable position as far as his immediate happiness is concerned, but a most dangerous one as far as his

future, the future of his moral energy is concerned. He is the son and heir presumptive to a formidable prosperity. He is growing up under conditions of unheard of wealth, progress, modernity, ease. He enjoys a degree of freedom from interference that is undoubtedly to be explained by the loosening of family ties. He is being taught every day that his people is destined to know only prosperity and world power. Such rosy optimism during good times, and at the impressionable period of his life, cannot but offer certain risks for the future.

Surely there is great risk in such overweening confidence, when we think of how purely economic is the nature of the society he is to live in, how it lacks the historical continuity that would give it direction, of how social ties are almost non-existent, and of how national sentiment for the later layers of immigrants is linked only with thoughts of profit.

The American child seems very happy to be an American—when he is brought to Europe, nowadays, he seems bored by everything there—and very proud of his "nationality." In so doing he shows his awareness of the advantages he possesses at home; he gives no thought to the need

of traditions or ideals which history has shown to be indispensable. Not that one could accuse Americans of lacking patriotism; that would be stupid indeed. But we must not forget that in perhaps one-third of the population the sense of a new fatherland has developed only with the sense of better living conditions. What would happen for instance, if prosperity should wane for a time, if severe reverses were encountered and gave birth to bitter disappointment and sharply conflicting interests? Nothing could offer more danger for the unity of America than a loyalty that was largely economic, a loyalty founded on the notion of success and continuous gain.

It has already been pointed out that the spirit of aggressive nationalism seems absurd in the case of the United States. We have also sought to prove that a patriotism based on economic interest would be a most uncertain support as well. There remains, then, only the idea of a "superior civilization." But such an idea cannot be detached, in the mind of the child as in that of the man, from some moral concept as an inner ruling principle, and some established set of manners and customs as an outer practice. Now, no moral concept, and

certainly, no civilized code of manners is likely to survive the break-down of the family and the rapid spread of divorce.

These rather pessimistic observations on the evolution of the American family will no doubt apply much less to small town and country life than to the great urban centers. We must also bear in mind that the influx of immigrants has been greatly moderated, and that as a result the flow of population from the country to the city, spurred on by agricultural depression and the lure of city comforts, has grown to alarming proportions. The United States appears to be heading a movement that leads the world toward an exclusively urban type of civilization.

It is leading . . . and yet appears most seriously threatened by the moral consequences of such a tendency. For the old spirit of the "settlers" out of which the strongest elements in the recent system of morals were derived, and which still serves roughly as the framework for American society, was not at all developed by city dwellers, or by "burghers." It was the spirit of "pioneers" and tillers of soil. The unchecked and accelerated growth of these vast human concentrations, to the loss of

the smaller rural centers, must inevitably end in the adulteration and destruction of the old morality. The process may already be witnessed in Chicago and New York, the present mainsprings of the American mechanism, which no longer swing with the moral axis of the rest of the country.

Excessive growth of city populations results in social phenomena of a well-known type. The first is, notably, to place individuals under living conditions which are highly unfavorable to the survival of the family. A second effect is to make the dangers run during hard times of far greater magnitude than ever before. One shudders at the thought of what might happen for instance in the metropolitan district of New York, where some eight million people now live, if some unforeseen development deprived this montrous city of her prosperity and her opportunities for work.

To ward off such dangers which, though still far off, bode ill for the future of American life, and the American family, the people who direct the destinies of the United States must realize that these dangers in great part may be traced to the colossal growth of the cities.

VIII. THE ARISTOCRACY OF BUSINESS

But who does in truth direct the social destinies of America? The political organism has come to play a most insignificant rôle. "State socialism" does not exist and would not be tolerated. The American society having required no great efforts to establish itself, having waged no long struggles to extend or safeguard its territory, having on the other hand escaped from such dissension and civil strife as tends to strengthen the hands of the central, administrative government, has therefore given birth to none of those "castes," those entrenched and informed "bureaucracies," or "general staffs," whose *esprit de corps* works invisibly but eternally upon the destinies of peoples elsewhere in the world. America has remained, it must be emphasized once more, a wholly economic society.

But here as anywhere else the moving power in a human society is some kind of "aristocracy." We are not concerned, obviously, with the dozen or two of families whose mode of living and whose connections link them to the "socially prominent" of old Europe. American aristocracy has a very

pronounced and special character: it is a business aristocracy, the individual representatives of which change often and suddenly, but whose tendencies in the main hardly vary at all.

It has been estimated that the major part of the wealth and business in America is owned or controlled by about 15 per cent of the whole population. Under the guise of a democracy of widely diffused wealth and prosperity we discover, then, a tremendously concentrated capitalism. This situation takes on added importance when we bear in mind the weakness of the political structure. To all practical purposes the group of business aristocrats directs American life, and even if, as often happens, this class is divided within itself by competition, it exercises a unique and almost irresistible control over the whole social system. This class, I should say, includes promoters of enterprises, bankers, brokers, manufacturers, directors of great corporations, leaders in wholesale trade, and heads of department stores, all of them assisted by a vast retinue of "advisors," legal minds, financial experts, etc.

The origin of the members of this ruling class differs widely; and new additions are always being

recruited in a manner that is unsystematic enough. There are further super-imposed layers of "trail-blazers," promoters, speculators and even lucky employees. One never meets with "honorary" office-holders and sons of important families as is so often the case in Europe in all respectable enterprises. In America a man is "made" and holds his post of power only by virtue of his "efficiency." The average age of executives never seems to exceed forty-five. Among these there is a large number of recent European immigrants who have known how to profit from the vast development of American cities during the last twenty years. Almost all these business-men show a "front" of genial good-fellowship which makes them seem rather attractive; at heart they are reserved, and always instinctively on their guard.

Their constant aim in life is the same as that of their predecessors: to exploit all the opportunities which America offers, to turn every possible business chance to hand,—not in order to retire from business and the life of struggle as soon as they have gained success, but in order to go on and on, farther and farther up the scale. To be sure, they are humane, philanthropic, dispute no one's right to

succeed like them, and they are generally ready and willing to distribute to the masses the comforts they desire. Among themselves they practice a severe competition, but rarely break through a certain code of common group interest, infringement upon which would expose the erring individual to crushing reprisals on the part of the group.

This aristocracy of business seems fully capable, if conditions remain as they are, of maintaining and still advancing the prosperity of the United States. But unless it is ready to go to great lengths of self-sacrifice, it may prove unequal to saving the framework of American civilization in the event of an economic emergency that threatens the prosperity of the mass—a terrible and blind mass, which will be found, perhaps, in that awful hour, to have utterly lost the stabilizing and sustaining force of moral and family traditions.

Will America succeed in establishing some form of aristocracy which will be more vigilant and farsighted than that of her business men?

For the time being the whole American social structure can remain firm only so long as its economic foundations are certain.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

I. EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN ECONOMICS

In the United States economic forces virtually take precedence over everything else. They supplement politics, account for the moral code practiced, forge the collective ideal of the people, and even fashion a certain type of beauty. They alone, virtually, insure the active cohesion of vast groups of men or families, whose origin is extraordinarily diverse, and who compose an economic society rather than a nation. In its present form American civilization cannot expand, or penetrate internationally, or even endure, unless economic fortune and opportunity are guaranteed for it.

To judge America's chances for the future it is not enough merely to amass statistics, compare reports, and draw the balance; we must look beyond

immediate facts, scrutinize the promise and the dangers present, comprehend the structure of the whole system and its functioning through men and matter. It is a delicate problem, since here again a direct comparison between America and Europe would be worthless: there seems to be a fundamental opposition between the two systems, from the very outset.

The "partitioning" of Europe into nations and States separated by rigid boundaries took place a long time before the coming of industrialism. And so European economics even in its modern application, is based on national and regional interests. Since in its development it has had to adapt itself to the exigencies of pre-established systems, it approaches those broader rhythms of free circulation and interchange only in the face of considerable resistance, and all too slowly as yet. The existence of a great number of different States, each jealously concerned with its own political destiny has resulted in a proportionate number of embittered commercial rivalries. Signs of "internationalization" have only begun to appear tardily in the shape of agreements between railroads, industrial

cartels, etc. Furthermore, the economic character of Europe—granted the richness of her soil, and the abilities of her population—offers these other aspects: a multiplicity of currency and exchange systems; a variety of products and of markets, of standards of quality and price; narrow fields of operation; a widespread prudence, and often, backwardness in starting new enterprises; and finally, wherever the different States are embarrassed by the want of space, bitter colonial rivalry.

Now, despite all its progress and its uninterrupted advance during the last hundred years, European economics has known only one period of complete prosperity and optimism: that is the era of prodigious business expansion that marked the middle of the nineteenth century, when the new activity had not yet run up against the limits of the old order. Ever since then, Europe has felt a deep *malaise;* she has never stopped worrying about to-morrow; she has never been free of secret fears for her peace, of sudden shocks and contests between States—all of this fostering, under the mask of ever growing prosperity, an unhappy state of uncertainty and pessimism.

America has come into her own under almost

exactly the opposite conditions. Hence her very different economic growth and her very different state of mind.

From the very outset, industry in America has had a practically unlimited field for expansion as well as absolute freedom of trade. To grow rich America needed only to march straight ahead. There was no danger of obstruction by old barriers, no worry about competitors already in the field; the greatest danger lay in planning enterprises on too small a scale, in not being daring enough in vision and in execution. For America there was never any fear for the scarcity or dearness of raw materials, the smallness of consumer markets —these two problems which always harass the European business man. America needed at first only to exploit and to produce; to take the greatest possible advantage of new resources that offered themselves daily, and to satisfy the needs of a great population swollen continually by a stupendous flood of immigration.

Thus while in Europe industrial growth required adjustment to minute details, and involved continued fear of friction, America was simply carried along by the urge and the contagion of expan-

sion. Industry in America acquired two great virtues which have become the very sign of its strength: daring and optimism.

And now America has come to believe complacently that these two virtues are innate in her people, and assumes this as proof of her destined superiority over Europe. It may not seem amiss, here, to remind her that these traits derive from certain special conditions—and conditions which may, after all, be exceptional ones. As we have pointed out, there has been the advantage of a boundless field of operations; there has also been the no less decisive one of an almost perpendicular rise in population. In a hundred and fifty years, the population of the world has doubled, and that of Europe has tripled; but the power of production of European industry has increased more than three-fold. Now in the same space of time the inhabitants of the United States have not multiplied two or three-fold, but thirty-five to forty times. Professor J. Russell Smith has made some amusing estimates of how, at the present rate of growth, the American population in a hundred and fifty years from now would be more than three billion! Of course these are purely numbers

and statistics, yet there is a grain of truth in them that reveals the mainsprings of American economics: the exploring of new territories, the abundance of natural wealth, the increase of native population, simultaneous with the influx of immigrants, were all factors which combined and spurred each other on, as it were, along such a dazzling road to fortune as the world had never known!

Now we must ask ourselves whether the daring and optimistic tendencies of Americans may not be deeply modified in the near future through alterations in material conditions or by causes which are properly human and social.

Before indicating such changes as are likely to come about in the elements of the American economic structure, we may sum up briefly our view of the situation in general. The United States for a long time to come seems fated to remain a privileged nation, viewed either from the human and social, or the material point of view. Indeed, her chances seem more certain materially than humanly speaking. Looking ahead fifty or a hundred years from now there seems to be nothing on the horizon capable of menacing the good fortune of the United States dangerously, unless it be

a possible weakening of her own social energy as a result of excessive prosperity.

Through the force of its own development the American economic structure will undoubtedly have to revise and readjust many elements which affect the unity or balance of the whole system: it will have to redistribute advantages more evenly, adapt its methods to new conditions, arrange itself to face more complex problems, follow new currents boldly. Out of this will result, perhaps, much individual and collective ruin, frequent crises and "panics." Yet in the main, the natural and material advantages of the *milieu* will retain their effectiveness.

II. THE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF SPACE

A vast and free space, uncommonly rich and useful resources: these have been, materially speaking, the ruling causes of American prosperity up to now. Space reacts beneficially on the forces of economic growth, first through the attraction it always holds for business; second, through the chance it offers for a wide distribution of activities and trade channels; and finally, through the possibility of adapting certain methods of exploita-

tion in accordance with the size of the field of operations and the density of its contents.

Great as the appetite for new soil to exploit may be in America, there remains yet for a long time enough to sate it with. The United States supports about a hundred and twenty million people at the present time. It would be wrong to assert, as is so often done, that she could easily support twice this number, under the economic and social system that prevails to-day. America can no longer assure a mounting prosperity to new hordes who may hasten to her shores *en masse*. But the extent of unexploited terrain is still such as to leave a liberal margin to future enterprise. Furthermore, American enterprise is penetrating all the time and will penetrate more and more to Canada, and Central and South America.

The magnitude of the field of operations, as we have already pointed out, constitutes a great advantage in itself for the productive power and the needs of modern industry. It is an immense point of superiority; for, in order to produce goods at low cost they must be produced in vast quantity, and in standardized form, by means of a prodigiously mechanized industry: this implies in

turn a consumer market large enough to absorb all the goods produced and to compensate invested capital for its risks. Assured as it is of an immense volume of sales, American industry can use machines for mass production, concentrating on a single article whose distribution runs into the millions, lowering its cost amazingly, and benefiting from all the advantages of specialization on a grand scale. If not for the vastness of the American market that enabled Ford to launch the cheap automobile, drawing a swarm of competitors after him, the automobile might have remained even to-day an article of luxury. . . . One sees how, in this way, the advantages of space give an industrial people a world-wide influence over the customs of all humanity.

A large and unobstructed field of operation also assures such an industrial civilization of regularity and simplicity in its currents of trade: from old territories to new ones, and vice-versa, manufactured products in exchange for raw materials, cloth and machines for wheat, lumber or oil. . . .

While Europe offers us a terribly complex network of trade currents, some large, others small, at times uniting together, at others resisting each

other, checked here by natural obstacles, there by tariff walls, drawn or repulsed in various directions by competition and national rivalries, American trade has on the contrary developed along the broadest and most regular lines. The most casual study of traffic conditions, of the rise of the railroads and the cities along them, shows us how absolutely dominant the East-West current has been up to now, directed as it was by the process of discovery, settlement, and exploitation of new lands and resources, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The cities that have grown up at the terminals of this East-West current, on the shores of both oceans, and those at intermediate points which regulate the intercourse of one coast with the other, contain in themselves almost a third of the entire population.

Now, like the factor of immense markets, the simplicity of trade currents increases the economic return. The lines of transportation are utilized to the utmost and at the lowest possible cost, distribution of goods is swifter and more complete, demand and supply satisfy each other without delay, goods reach their point of destination and consumption at the lowest possible prices.

And similarly, the great space of the country, encouraging large-scale plans, makes capital and credit more daring. As fast as the laying-out of their immense country proceeded, American business men could estimate almost exactly what the profits of new enterprises would be on the basis of previous successful ones. There have, to be sure, been grievous miscalculations, disappointments, "crises,"—those American crises which were always born of excess, of youth. But on the whole the power, wealth, and daring of the American economic system have been enhanced by this assurance of opportunities, clearly or ill understood, but ever grander than the efforts that lie behind.

The great open spaces eternally spread before them, always beckon to the fortune-hunter, offering the lure of the unknown and fabulous claims still to be staked out, making a marvelous and unfailing appeal to pioneering, gambling, bold and hardy spirits. It is the eternal call to the new man and to new enterprise; it fits well with a land of swiftly mounting population, which forms the principal element of strength therein.

And space, finally, means almost the certainty of

at least some relative balance always between resources and needs, the possibility of self-sufficiency, and freedom from interference in domestic trade.

Here we come to protectionism.

III. AMERICAN PROTECTIONISM

American protectionism has given rise to endless controversies, even in America. As for Europe, she has remained painfully surprised at America's preaching the virtues of free-trade, while surrounding herself with a veritable "Chinese Wall." But protectionism in great or small degree is implicit in the very economic and social system of the United States; it is, in a sense, part of the vital instincts of the American organism.

We must recall that the United States has attained her great power through the continual influx of immigrants to her shores, most of them European. Now she could not go on for an indefinite time absorbing both immigrants and merchandise sent by Europe. A choice had to be made between men and merchandise, in view of the danger of having too many men and being unable to feed them and keep them busy. The first pro-

tective tariffs were undoubtedly the natural result of an intensive immigration.

Colonies having a slow growth, having restricted or specialized production, and receiving particular kinds of immigrants, find it possible to maintain the policy of the "open door," for some time, with certain reservations. But this is impossible in a country where a torrent of incoming population tends to exceed in its volume and flow the rate at which natural resources can be exploited and new machines brought into play: here the open door would throw the immigrants into a position of even greater poverty and instability than their previous lot. The instinct of self-preservation in Americans made them in early times take their choice between unrestricted importation of European goods and the free entry of European immigrants.

The choice was clear for a society which held sway over immense territories and boundless resources, which needed manual labor above all, and which aspired to become a Great Power: men could produce goods, goods could not create men. They decided in favor of unlimited immigration as against unlimited imports.

This protectionism was also deeply attuned to

the increasing consciousness in Americans of their independence of other peoples. The very word "independence" is the key-note of their history and of the instincts of old America. If the territory of the United States had been less rich, less wide and varied, this desire for independence might have retained only a political and sentimental value. But we have seen—and it can scarcely be overemphasized—how much the American society is essentially economic rather than political. It was inevitable, then, that this passion for independence be applied with the utmost possible force on the economic plane. It was not only inevitable, but could be easily foreseen from that day when America discovered how well she was provided with raw materials and how immigration furnished her with manual labor. Let us not forget that the immigrants were mainly Europeans, "civilized men" who nearly all had some trade or technical training, for which they sought employment.

Thus protectionism seems to be linked, not only with the fact of immigration, but with the very psychology of the immigrant and his social needs. The man who had left Europe, who had fled from

misery to find a means of subsistence in America could not endure Europe's competing with him on this new soil and holding him from gaining a liberal wage. One thinks of the psychology of the immigrant, of the social needs of the workingman, and concludes that protectionism is bound up with the very roots of that which we have termed the "American civilization."

But the element of space still remains the most important factor. The spread, the wealth, the freshness of American soil assure not only that balance between resources and needs, without which protective tariffs would be worthless; but, offering as they do a great unused reserve for enterprise, they have thus far prevented the existing accord between manufacturers from being seriously threatened by too sharp competition or too marked a development of "regional" interests.

However, the effects of space no longer are evident to the same extent, now that population has increased so vastly, and natural wealth is exploited so rapidly. Thus changes prepare themselves which cause entirely new problems to arise.

IV. THE NEW FORCES

A few years ago the torrent of immigration to the United States was checked by rather brutal regulations. The American no longer takes his choice between importing merchandise and human beings: he restricts them both. An ethnical and social protectionism has been added to the economic one of the high tariff.

This event is bound to have deep reverberations. Will it guarantee that margin of opportunity which American effort has always enjoyed in the past—that free field of action which an excess of population would have reduced? One thinks that this will be the case for a time. But the factors merely of normal growth in a people of 120,000,000 and of the moderate immigration tolerated or taking place fraudulently, indicate that population will grow denser so long as there are further economic opportunities to exploit. In view of all this, a spirit of caution is beginning to show itself already. Soon prudence will dictate that these rhythms be even further moderated.

For the rest, the United States will not always

enjoy those simplified currents of trade which are such a boon to her. Nor will she always be able to avoid the friction caused by sectional rivalries: the spread of industry itself and the steady rise of land values will result in economic compartments or divisions.

Already the West is self-sufficient with regard to certain kinds of produce or goods: trade-currents from the East are drawn to it less forcibly than some time back. The great Pacific zone contains enough resources and a great enough variety of them to attain a certain independence with regard to other sections. The large development of other zones in the periphery, such as Texas, may create new currents. . . . True, there are no signs as yet to be perceived of decline in the predominance of the East commercially. But neither is this preponderance growing, and it takes on more and more a financial character. An excessive protective tariff, added to the checking of immigration will tend little by little to undermine the supremacy of New York.

At the same time it is to be noted that the interior traffic currents of the United States are undergoing new influences from without. There is

the influence of the Panama canal, there is the influence of Canadian prosperity. One and the other bring about trade movements in the direction of north-south and south-north,—a trend of commerce which might well fix itself some day along an axis of activity which is independent of the older concentrations on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, the axis of Chicago and New Orleans.

Furthermore, certain branches of American industry are beginning to detach themselves from the old trunk. The textile industry is gradually moving down from New England to the South, drawn by nearness to cotton, and less rigorous labor legislation. The tendency to move the site of manufacturing plants will become more general as manufacturers are forced to lower the cost of their goods. Wide diffusion of electrical power enables industries to remain far from the source of coal, and avoid the high costs of freight transportation by going nearer to the sources of other raw materials they need. In the cities where labor congregates too thickly, where the population has become unwieldy, the cost of living rises, and salaries rise with it. Hence certain projects for the

decentralization or dispersion of industries to small towns. . . . These are, in reality, only the first symptoms of a crisis of readjustment which will lead American economy to new directions and new methods.

For even in America one finds wasteful or antiquated methods in use, if only in the exploiting of natural resources!

V. THE EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES: THE AGRICULTURAL CRISIS

It is a commonplace in Europe to say that America is squandering her natural riches. The exhaustion of some of her supplies in the near future, such as oil, the most important one of all, is already widely prophesied.

However, there is little need for anxiety about the future. One has the conviction that nature in America will always respond beautifully to the searchings and the labor of men, so long as men remain capable of invention and effort. So far, the predictions of a shortage of oil have been of little avail: there is, on the contrary, overproduction for the moment. . . .

Thus far Americans have only exploited those

resources in their country that were easiest to obtain and utilize. Their object in view was always the quick return, not the lasting one. Everything followed the rhythms of a speculative economics rather than a regulative one. The whole world knows by now that they have pillaged their superb forests.

The working of oil fields has often been done in the spirit of a mad rush. You cannot continue at such a pace very long without having a sick headache some fine morning. The United States will sooner or later have to pay penance for this period of "easy riches." But only at the cost of many individual disasters and transfers of fortune, and at times even of broad mass-upheavals, will such expiation manage to preserve the fundamental wealth of the country.

The clearest example of this is the present agricultural depression. It has been for some time a source of irritation to public opinion in America. It is an irritation that reveals surprise and discomfiture; that hides, perhaps, some devouring doubt. This crisis is forcing the American, who loves action above all, to pause and reflect.

But in general, before one can take action, one

must understand somehow. . . . And the depression in the farming sections is rather difficult to understand clearly. Is it not after all bound up with the whole vast economic structure of America?

We may analyze the principal aspects of this situation as follows: First, overproduction not easily lending itself to control; second, production costs too high; third, selling price too high. On the whole, agriculture in this country presents an aspect of much confusion and disorder, with much real misery, bitter complaints, and a widespread political agitation.

Overproduction seems nowadays to be one of the characteristic evils of the American economic system. In the field of agriculture it seems to hold as well for cotton in the South, as for fruit in California, and wheat in the Middle-West. To us it seems the inevitable outcome of monoculture, or single-crop farming, in an industrialized form, resulting in excessive quantity of output, and little variety. American farming suffers from the same vice as the wine-culture of the Mediterranean. With its too rigid necessities, production cannot keep pace with the varying fluctuations of the

markets. The concentration upon a single crop causes the most bitter competition because the producers have thrown all their resources and all their means into the output of a single product and cannot withdraw or change their tactics.

American agriculture has also had to repent deeply for its old habits of using credit to the limit. Most farms have been developed by means of heavy mortgages which are in turn reflected in the cost of the agricultural products. The farmer most often uses his working capital for the purpose of extending the area he cultivates rather than improving the methods and resources of his business. As the new land is exhausted, weighed down by mortgages, the farmer, unable to pay for enriching this soil, seeks his salvation in a further extension of the cultivated area: this makes overproduction certain and aggravates the unevenness and instability of the farming situation.

Two other factors react unfavorably on the cost of farm products. The first is the exodus of crowds of workers from the country to the great cities. The second is the increased cost of machinery, tools, and most of the commodities which the farmer must procure outside of his farm.

The movement of workers away from the land seems to be a universal phenomenon to-day. But it has for some time been more marked in the United States than anywhere else: it was estimated in 1926 that between 600,000 and 700,000 people had deserted the country in America and gone to the cities. This is undoubtedly the result of the improvement in living conditions and the higher wages to be earned in the cities. It is also the result of the new laws restricting immigration: industry secretly pines for immigrant labor.

As for the relation between prices of manufactured goods and those of agricultural produce, this problem gives rise to a particularly difficult and vexing controversy everywhere.

In the United States, even more than in Europe, there has been since the war an especially great spread between the price levels of farm produce on the one hand, and that of this same produce in the finished state (i.e., ready to be consumed), and of manufactured goods on the other hand. It is often explained on the ground that farm products being, in part, exported to foreign countries, are subject to fluctuations in world-market prices, while manufactured goods are protected and upheld in price

by the tariff wall against foreign competition. It is this thesis which makes the American farmers tolerate the policy of protection. In our opinion, it touches on only one aspect of the real problem.

To tell the truth, the whole complicated and yet rigid chain of economic forces to-day condemns the farmer through the very nature of his calling to a certain isolation and to an exposed position. Single-handed and alone, he bears the pressure of a mass of concerted forces, all bent on obtaining the lowest possible price level for agricultural products. He is ill-armed to resist the pressure of such a mass; and subjected as he is to entirely different conditions, peculiar to his own industry, he hasn't even the resource of protecting himself by joining the said mass. Hence follows his constant recourse to political agitation. It is during the Presidential elections in the United States that the claims of the farmers are aired.

The cycle of industrial prices is integrally composed of the reciprocal relations of manufacturers, workers, salaried specialists or office-workers, middle-men, shippers and distributors. Each of these vital branches, sensing impositions on its own rights will react immediately against its fellows and

compel restitution, in order to retain harmony and balance between them: the manufacturer by cutting down production or raising prices, the worker by striking, the distributor by liquidating his stock or cutting his orders, the carrier by reducing service or raising rates. All these diverse branches of industry can make the impression they want by immediate and general action.

The farmer can do no such thing. He cannot limit his harvest once the labor and money have been put into cultivation. Even if he tried to master the situation by restricting his planting he would be exposing himself to new and uncertain risks, since the prices he objects to are not those of the season when he sows but those of the season when he reaps, or most often of the season when he finds buyers for his crops. He cannot strike because all days are not the same for him: if he has not sown or planted at the right moment he cannot make up for lost time no matter what the change in price may be. He cannot store his perishable merchandise, and even when it is not perishable he must have a sufficient working capital to hold out for better prices, which is rare indeed for single-crop farmers. . . . Now this same farmer finds

opposed to him a coalition of interests bent on lowering the price of his products: the manufacturer who fears a rise in food prices, with its resultant advance in wages, the worker complaining of the "high cost of living," the middleman who wants to replace his inventory at lower rates, the shipper who is always a kind of manufacturer and sometimes something of a middleman.

In view of such conditions it is obvious that the farmer cannot depend on a general movement of prices for the return from his crop, but must count rather on the quantity of produce harvested within a given agricultural cycle: it is the quantity that he cannot regulate, since he never knows either what the market needs will be after the harvest, or what kind of harvest the elements will grant him.

How can this dilemma be solved?

VI. THE RETORT OF THE OLDER COUNTRIES

In the older agricultural countries, like France, the peasant learned a long time ago to adjust himself to the hazards of his business. The cultivating he goes in for is relatively on a small scale, so that in case of need he can at least economize in his out-

lay for machinery and labor, or at least he need not submit tamely to the demands of manufacturers and dealers who sell him machinery and base them on higher costs. Then precisely because he is working on a small scale the amount of capital that he uses annually does not represent such a heavy investment that he dare not store up a part of his harvest. He can, in fact, do it the more easily, because *polyculture* permits him to diversify his investments according to market conditions for his various products.

However, even in the older countries there is a spread between industrial prices and agricultural prices whenever the farmers do not use coöperative sales organizations.

It takes centuries to create a trained peasantry, which is inured to the hazards of the trade. . . . Now in America, farming like everything else is still young, and partakes of the swift pace of exploitation seen on every hand. The farmer bears the brunt of the maximum risks that his business offers. Isolated as much in America as any peasant in Europe, he must protect himself against mass-interests that are mightier than anywhere else, and in some instances well-nigh irresistible. Almost in-

variably he has but a single crop. If he goes in for large-scale cultivation he must depend on elaborate and burdensome machinery. How should he regulate his crop? Should he store up some of it; should he divide up his sales? He is at the mercy of the seasons and the markets, of markets, moreover, whose fluctuations may be caused by wholly outside influences. And often, it is to be noted, that he has "taken the cream off" his land, and the exhausted soil requires more husbanding, more costly fertilizers.

From this crisis we may learn some lessons in agriculture, and in the exploitation of natural resources in general.

The American experiment proves that in spite of facilities offered by the use of elaborate machines, the laws of agriculture are vastly different from those of industry. Industrializing the farm is no guarantee of prosperity; sometimes the contrary is true. The pursuit of farming demands in men an eternal alertness and flexibility, in order to face unforeseeable accidents and special dangers, which is quite the opposite of that rigidity and single-mindedness that monoculture on a quantity-scale requires. The experience of America also

shows that while the farmer, in order to keep his position a flexible one, must restrict and diversify his undertakings, he must not tamely submit to the powerful industrial coalition ranged against him. Alone, he is inevitably crushed by forces whose immediate interests have made them solidly against him.

We may also derive some invaluable lessons from the American manner of exploiting natural wealth. Whatever the richness of the soil or the subsoil may be, it will not do merely to "exploit" these riches: they must be worked cautiously and husbanded. And so here, traditional rules of prudence and foresight take preëminence again. The great problem for the American system of economics will be to pass over from the dizzy rhythms of the present time to a more measured and deliberate pace. We must conclude,—when we see overproduction persist in spite of low prices—that the stuff is good, but the method is wrong. . . .

In truth, America can afford to "pay the price" for a certain number of mistakes, or reverses. She is able to do this, because of her prodigious natural wealth. She can afford it also because of the enormous financial credit at her command. For a long

time her reserves will be so ample that she will always be able to make a "fresh start." We have seen, since the war, how she has suffered various maladies, at different times, of which the "farming problem" is only one example; but in no case have these distempers precipitated a general crisis. The abundance of credit precludes a universal depression or panic. It does not, however, exclude the possibility of severe readjustments and much individual ruin.

VII. THE DANGERS OF THE "CLOSED DOOR"

The great question for the material future of the United States is whether a standard of living and a universal prosperity surpassing by far the level of other peoples can be preserved for an indefinite time under the cover of protectionism.

The experiences of the past, and notably of the last war, with Germany blockaded, and Russia segregated from the rest of Europe, have shown us that a nation cannot maintain its growth and prosperity for long under a system of *closed economy*—however large the extent of the shut-in territory may be. Whereas the United States has up to now built up her whole prosperity—and such a

prosperity as the world has never seen—on the rigorous and systematic principle of protection.

To what extent and at what moment will American protectionism bring about those disturbances and dangers which all "closed" economic policy involves? Here it is no longer the prodigality of nature that concerns us; it is man, and man alone, that determines the course of events.

Up to recently the protective tariff in America did not apply to raw material, or to inventions, or "styles," and in general not to things of the mind, or to man-power. This left a liberal margin for outside influences to seep in, a fact of tremendous significance; for a country which drew so largely and for such a long time, as America, upon foreign man-power, which was civilized, technically and morally educated, abroad—such a new country, enjoying a vast territory and prodigies of Nature, enriched herself, progressed, expanded, far more than if she merely imported merchandise to be consumed. For, in so doing, she was importing that which countries need most to receive from without: new initiative, and eternal rejuvenation of methods.

The same is true for the importation of "styles,"

models, and things of the mind. Nobody can reproach America for having closed herself to the creations of others. She is rather to be reproached for an exaggerated tendency to "copy" others. She is ruled either by the "standard" or by snobbery, both of which are opposed to originality. No people in the world, save the Japanese perhaps, is quicker to grasp what comes from other parts of the world, to imitate it *en masse*, and then throw up a tariff wall to protect the imitation.

Raw material, the United States imports more and more, although her power of production and reserves are in some ways without peer, anywhere. . . .

Protective duties were not intended up to recently as a "closed" economic policy. It was rather as a systematic organization of trade for the purpose of protecting American labor, while giving it the broadest facilities for supplying their needs from without, either in material or spiritual things.

But now a great new factor comes into play: the restrictive immigration laws.

So long as immigration remained very extensive and virtually free, the policy of protective tariffs

was a wholesome one. But as soon as restriction of immigrants was added to restriction of goods, an entirely new situation arose. Americans are unwilling to look it in the face. But it is very clearly before them.

No great social organism can persist or renew its vitality save under the spur of competition and intercourse with the outside world. Once America rejected foreign goods but endured foreign competition in the guise of immigrants. There was competition in the labor market, which in turn communicated its stimulus to all the other branches of activity. The immigrant who represented cheap labor, spurred the industrial on to new enterprise; he compelled the earlier arrivals, or the older hands, to seek their living further along, to look for higher wages, that is, to become enterprisers themselves. All the people in America found themselves urged on to new undertakings first by the coming of the immigrants, and then by their ambition. The whole economic and social system established itself in tune to the rhythms of a rising dynamism. A dynamism which was always justified and rewarded, as the newly congregated populations probed new resources, and the markets were

thronged with ever greater and greater numbers of consumers.

The stoppage of immigration has broken this rhythm. It is still too near our time for us to be able to measure the effects with the proper perspective. But certain indications are perceptible already.

The first development that we behold is the shortage of manual labor. This deficiency affects domestic life, in the first place; human customs, the whole family institution, are deeply disturbed. Industry, threatened by the credit inflation, which encourages enterprises of the same nature, must support increased wages, which in turn increasing the cost of manufacture force plants to move to other parts of the country. Again, since it receives no more cheap labor from foreign countries, industry must further draw upon agricultural labor, thus aggravating further the problems of the farmers.

These are present indications. What will the future show?

Perhaps the day will come when American industry—which unlike the French trades, makes no articles of luxury or quality—will manufacture

only a greatly reduced number of articles, in the making of which her machinery for mass-production will be especially useful and preëminent. As for all the other articles, those that require the "human touch" or depend on style, America will be able to produce them at a loss, or will only sell them at prohibitive prices: the public will have to import them from foreign countries, or do without them. If they are to be imported, in the end, then it means that protectionism is giving way. If the public do without these things, then their standard of living, their well-being suffers. But inability to produce certain articles does not prevent overproduction of the others. The quantity may increase while the variety of them decreases.

In fact overproduction seems to be a disease native to the United States. Its primary cause was most probably the excessive mechanization of industry as an aftermath of the last war. Yet who can claim that the stoppage of immigration has not affected consumer demand in America? The skill and capacity of the producer are bound to advance much faster, henceforth, than the needs of consumers. A rising scale of wages, with its resultant rise in purchasing power, will bridge the gap

between the two only temporarily, not indefinitely. . . .

To conclude, the American economic policy cannot escape the workings of this perfectly simple law: that when labor is lacking to fill certain needs within a country, either these needs go unsatisfied (and the level of civilization falls), or else they are filled by purchases in foreign countries.

And so, once more, America will find herself in a position where she must choose between the importation of goods or that of human beings.

But the choice is no longer so easy as it was formerly: to close the door upon foreign goods would mean for America to give up hope of ever collecting on her loans to Europe. Europe cannot pay except in the form of goods. And on the other hand, we have seen that halting immigration for a new country means to check progress in that country, and to threaten the foundations of family life.

America must, then, do the right thing by both immigration and importation.

Indeed, the prodigious prosperity enjoyed by America hides her problems from her. All increase in wealth which is due to an excess of tariff

protection is equivalent to artificial speculation upon a deficit deliberately created, and breeds unhealthy germs. These germs reside, both in the ease with which money is made, and in the amounts in which it is made.

The swiftness and ease with which money can be made breeds in the long run a certain moral decay, for the easier profits become, the less passion one tends to feel for hard work. Now the social structure of the United States has prospered up to now and can only endure and prosper in the future through the religion of work.

The largeness of profits also involves trouble. It stimulates people to spend money and gives them a feverish desire for pleasure. It may be favoring as well the habits of saving. But if the tendency to save money is spreading in the United States, the chase for pleasure is spreading much more quickly. . . .

We may conclude, then, that neither her natural wealth nor her material opportunities will fail America; her people and their social efforts are animated by an amazing spirit of youth; but her future is seriously menaced by the disintegration of the family and by an excess of protectionism.

PART FOUR

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER EIGHT

MODERN AND CONSERVATIVE POSITIONS

LET us resume.

Human society in the modern world is shaping itself under the pressure of masses. But the word "mass" instead of representing some vague idea of a multitude takes on more and more a definitely *economic* meaning, in view of the stupendous advance of industry and the intensified commerce of to-day. More and more is the existence of each one of us fused with this or that cycle of production and consumption, which bands together thousands or millions of men in a confraternity of work (in specialized stages), in order to convert or finish a given material, utilize some common process, or fill the same universal system of needs. These groups of thousands and millions, including the rich owner and the humblest laborer, whose

lot in this material world hangs on the vibrations of international markets, on the price of coal, oil, cotton, banking credit, on the efficiency of railroads, or the invention of new machines, are no longer diffuse, mis-shapen masses. They are like *blocs,* coherent, organic, having each the most jealous concern for its own interests.

These economic masses have more and more weight in the internal policy of States, and by their irresistible demands render the old idea of the State increasingly obsolete. It is they who determine, in large part, what international relations shall be, since they represent the decisive element in the balance of forces. And finally, it is the economic masses that direct the evolution of customs and morals, since they impose new ways of living, eating, dressing, and even social intercourse on men and women alike—all dictated by the interest of the mass in the highest possible "return," or in overcoming competition. . . .

It would be childish and absurd to seek the salvation of human society, or of human dignity, by combating the existence of such economic masses, or to throw oneself into a vain opposition to their development. Their growing empire over all things

is the outcome of a vast and universal movement, which has followed swiftly upon the vulgarizing and the perfection of the applied sciences. And furthermore, although man may suffer from this on the one hand, he derives such overwhelming advantages on the other, that it would be vain to arrest him in his course, and even more vain to try to make him retrace his steps.

It is within and through the economic masses, and not outside of them or against them, that the effort toward civilization must be exerted. It is in accord with the needs of such masses, and the exigencies of their growth, that a new code must be conceived; a new code, which at once preserves vital traditions of mankind and allows for his modern needs.

And so, to sum up our deepest preoccupations, our hopes and anxieties, our longings for illuminating principles and practical achievements, it seems that the supreme problem of the contemporary world is the *deproletarization* of the masses.

I. THE PASSING OF INDIVIDUALISM

But what, precisely, is the particular brand of inferiority implicit in the word "proletariat?" Or,

more properly, who are the "proletarians?" For over a century now, there have been vague and confused discussions and inquiries: great polemics and meager results!

Liberalism—and by that I mean a state of mind which we must now consider historical, and which dominated opinion toward the middle of the nineteenth century—liberalism, usually referred to as "bourgeois" paid no attention to mass-economics. It understood only the relations between persons, each person being assured of as full a liberty as possible, which in the political sense was a fundamental good. The very notion of a *proletariat* was something foreign to liberalism, since in theory, all individuals enjoyed the same rights, were subject to the same laws and were free to make whatever contracts they pleased with each other. The only difference between citizens within the social order were those which effort, success, thrift, or inheritance had contributed. Unfortunates were dependent not on the whole economic body but on charity or philanthropy.

From the social point of view, liberalism justified itself by the reward it offered to the most energetic; from the economic point of view, by the

selection it encouraged, of the strongest, of those whose labors could be most effective or most fruitful in the creation of wealth. In the interests of civilization in general, liberalism, by placing an absolute value on the right of private property and of inheritance, guaranteed the stability of private fortunes, encouraged the formation of a cultivated class, which served as a fountain-head of political inspiration and guardian of customs; thus, setting up a barrier against a too brutal invasion of all power by the newer arrivals.

Liberalism among the nations of Western Europe represented both the flowering of an old spiritual culture which seemed, from then on, sufficient unto itself, and an enthusiastic urge of the middle classes toward the new opportunities offered by material progress. Thus liberalism, in order to protect its treasures and the refinements of an acquired civilization, boasted political freedom and social stability; on the other hand, it opened the doors wide to economic forces in order to derive profit from the new applied sciences.

Its prestige and advantages were so great, that for almost half a century in England and France, for example, it could be observed that the indus-

trial revolution was really transforming the economic status of all citizens, without rendering their social and legal status any different from what it had been in the agricultural age, or the commercial age.

But it was madness to believe that economic forces, developing in broader and accelerating rhythms, would leave the basis of liberal or "bourgeois" civilization untouched, for long. In fact, as the sway of economic forces over the world of physical things became greater, all the ways of living and thinking of vast human masses were involved in their train.

Soon middle-class liberalism had to make compromises, if not in principle, in reality, with the new aspirations of the masses. This marked the beginning of the *democratic* spirit. Democracy—here again I find a word that has assumed already a purely historical sense—democracy is essentially a development out of middle-class liberalism, in that democracy, like liberalism, recognizes only the individual, and respects that which is the essence of personal independence: the right to property and the right to inheritance. But though democ-

racy is still concerned with the individual, it now considers the individual as placed in a new environment, among new circumstances, and having new desires and needs, which are primarily economic rather than spiritual or political. For, so long as the individual has needs that are economic instead of political, he is more worried about having equality, material equality, rather than liberty, and he conceives of politics merely as designed to protect his immediate interests.

Thus democracy, respecting the basic qualities of liberalism, but wary of, or restrained from, paying more attention to the physical necessities of a humanity that is gripped by new forces, finds itself besieged, in turn, by incoherent thrusts and drives, on behalf of conflicting interests. Faithful as it is to the dogma of equalitarian individualism, which prevents it from looking beyond the desires of the isolated citizen, and faithful at the same time to the dogma of liberty, which restrains it from seeking to modify the play of natural forces, democracy, more than any other system, falls victim to the undirected pressure of economic masses which it can neither control nor guide, since it ignores them on principle.

The particular attitude of recognizing only the individual and ignoring economic masses characterizes both middle-class liberalism and democracy. This prejudice, born of social formulæ, which are now outworn, has caused the striking disparity that may be observed nowadays between the old political morality of the States and the present problems of civilization.

In socialism, on the other hand, we find a first, definite consciousness of the phenomena of masses, but vitiated by profound errors with regard to the internal organization of the body economic and the conditions of modern wealth.

II. THE ERRORS AND THE DECAY OF SOCIALISM

Socialism—I speak of the old-fashioned socialism, for it would be hard to define present-day socialism, to say where it begins and where it ends —theoretical socialism offered itself to the world in opposition to middle-class individualism, and as the long-awaited interpretation of the workings of the new economic masses.

Being the direct outcome of the discontent of those masses, its peculiar merit has been to call attention to their existence. It is due to this that

it has the advantage of seeming more modern and "more advanced" than other doctrines.

In truth, its interpretation of mass-phenomena was both crude and ingenuous, imitating by contrast the excesses of individualism which it purported to denounce. It was a crude interpretation, which, in order to flatter sentimental or emotional partisanships, to excite popular prejudice or bolster up election campaigns, could discern in the complex functioning of mass-economics only the exploitation of the weak by the strong, of the poor by the rich. It was a naïve theory, which, through its dogma of class-struggle, denied the very essence of the phenomena in question: the fact that once linked together in a cycle of producing and consuming wealth, a cycle ever more extensive and varied, men, in the heart of a common mass, felt the restraints of a solidarity that conflicting appetites could not destroy without imperiling the very existence of the group and of all the individuals who composed it. The doctrines of socialism, at the opposite extreme, surely imitated the excesses of individualism, since by setting workers and employers against each other, by proclaiming the class struggle, and by seeking to divide up the

economic body, socialism sacrificed the vitality and the progress of the mass to immediate interests, which now appeared to be particular, and at other times professed to be collective.

The word "proletariat," in its current usage, takes its meaning from the interpretation given by socialism (in the light of the class-struggle), of modern mass-economics. Whoever lives by his wages belongs to the proletariat.

The artificiality of such a doctrine is apparent as soon as the employer, with a better understanding of the community of interests that binds him and his fellow-workers to the heart of the economic mass, abandons the attitude of absolute individualism and considers himself no longer a dealer in labor, but a leader. Besides, there is no longer any sound basis for the socialist conception of the proletariat, in view of the experience of America: for there we see how closely are linked the interests of the worker, with regard to his wage, and those of the owner, with regard to his profit, both occupied with the same considerations, the same chances, sounding the same formulae for a common prosperity, under shelter of a commercial and ethnical protection that marks the limits of the

most tremendous mass that the world has ever seen.

In proclaiming the class-struggle, old-fashioned socialism, which was supposed to explain mass-phenomena, negated the fundamental qualities of these phenomena: economic unity. Whence another error was born that should be enough to discourage all effort toward the "realization" of socialism: an error with regard to the very conditions of modern wealth.

Socialism clung to the notion of wealth which was acquired, static, and divisible. It directed the claims of the "proletariat" toward State control of property, and the division of wealth by the State. It aspired also to an equal distribution of reserves whereby the sufferings of the poor could be reduced.

But where, in the world to-day, is there any wealth that is immobile, acquired, static, and divisible? No idea could possibly seem more antiquated. Against the abstract idea of equality which calls for a redistribution of wealth on an abstract basis, our present experience offers, instead, a specializing of activity, determined by the changing rôle of each mass. The masses, as well, are

neither equal nor independent of each other. Wealth no longer exists as property definitely acquired and static, since the prevailing price of a piece of land or a factory depends on the momentary situation in the markets of the world. Even the peasant and farmer depend for the yield on their crops, on freight costs, credit conditions, the buying-power of workingmen, a cyclone or a drought in America, Australia, Asia. Modern wealth is only produced, added to, and preserved in accordance with its participation in a more or less accelerated movement or circulation of trade, whose network spreads throughout the world.

The key to world movements is not in production as has been so often said, but in *circulation.* If you stop circulation, or traffic, production immediately becomes plethoric, and begins to fade off; and on the contrary, if you speed up and facilitate traffic, then consumption will increase and stimulate production. To-day, any event such as a new law, a strike, a war, that serves to impede the circulation of wealth, or what is tantamount, the circulation of "credit," precipitates not only something equal to full-fledged revolution, but a

paralysis of effort, a sapping of strength, a complete halt to progress, and then, disintegration.

This simple observation is enough to explain the constant reverses which socialism is suffering nowadays. In every State, as soon as socialists get into power and come to grips with the economic organism, lay hands on the treasury, credit, trade, signs of paralysis begin to show at once, even though such and such a socialistic formula may seem right in theory. This is because the very principle of socialistic intervention calls up the outworn idea of static and divisible wealth, an idea that is completely at variance with the great fundamental rhythms of modern activity.

It is in this way, rather than by a recital of their political "misdemeanors," that we may understand the frightful adventure of the Russian communists, which has brought on the material decline of all Eastern Europe.

In the Russian experiment we may perceive a basic error with regard to wealth, precisely the same as that of the old socialists who conceived of wealth as motionless and divisible! Starting out with this false principle, the communists proceeded to seize all wealth and attempted to re-

apportion it. Whereas, actually, the seizure and the partitioning meant nothing but a mortal smash-up of the whole economic organism, the rupture of a thousand arteries through which life circulated from one branch of society to another. The stoppage of trade involved necessarily a return to extremely backward ways of living. Thus communism, having been inspired by a primitive conception of wealth, succeeded for a time in reducing Russian society to the level of the ancient tribal system.

III. THE NEW CAPITALISM OF DYNAMIC WEALTH

Middle-class liberalism, not recognizing mass-economics, could not conceive either of unity or division within the mass: the question of the "proletariat" did not exist for it. Socialism, on the contrary, recognized the existence of mass phenomena, but failing to comprehend that the mass by its very nature presupposed a certain community of purposes and needs, conceived of it as divided arbitrarily into classes; and in further opposition to the needs of the mass as an organism, it represented the "classes" as fighting each other inevitably for the possession of divisible wealth: thus was derived its notion of the "proletariat" as

something, which in defiance of all reality, became a force of destruction, and served no constructive purpose whatsoever.

All this is now *passé* in the profound evolution of the modern world. And we arrive now at a doctrine which not only recognizes the existence of the economic masses, but organizes all social life in direct relation with the actual nature of the masses and with the circulation of trade throughout the world: it is a new system of capitalism, a splendid application of which may be seen in the United States. We shall call it the "capitalism of dynamic wealth" in opposition to the old capitalism of "static wealth," imagined by the socialists.

In conformity with this doctrine, the only one which can possibly be in accord with the present evolution of humanity, we must re-define, with the utmost precision, the words "proletarian" and "proletariat." Once we have fixed on a definition, our duties will be all the clearer.

The capitalism of dynamic wealth entails neither the social isolation of the individual, nor a class struggle. Unity, solidarity, is conceived, in fact and theory, as dictated by the real nature of the economic system. The individual, whatever his sta-

tion in life may be, becomes part of a unit made up of other individuals who share the destinies of the same economic group. All the individual members hold the position of "employees" or "salaried workers" under the demands of the common welfare, which may be enhanced only by an increase in the collective "return."

But at the same time, all the individuals are "bourgeois" since each in his own particular way, or degree, derives profit from the general well-being.

Thus a rhythm is created which is perfectly adapted to the real supremacy of the machine, and to humanity's present need for conveniences. Such a rhythm offers eternally new possibilities for material satisfaction; it whets our desire to improve our lot; it compels us to range ourselves in disciplined battalions for production and consumption. Production and consumption are what count above all. All the rest, family, nation, religion, culture, science, imagination, assume more and more an accessory rôle. The human species tends from now on to give heed only to that primal law which leads it to seek more physical pleasure at the cost of considerably greater effort and greater

renunciation. Men seem like the prisoners of a collective passion for consuming, whose increasing wants and capacities they are compelled to satisfy: impersonal links in an endless chain.

This movement is not lacking in grandeur and involves certain advantages. Though it tends to make individual types uniform by reducing their personality to common traits, it increases, on the other hand, the power, the well-being, and to a certain measure, the dignity of the collective type.

In contrast with the old liberalism which touched the high-water mark of a civilization whose cycle had been completed, the era of dynamic wealth offers a fresh start and an almost boundless power of transformation. In opposition to the old socialism of yesterday, which remains bound to a false idea of wealth and has misunderstood the essential nature of the masses, it represents the true organic and dynamic realities of universal evolution.

IV. THE MODERN DEFINITION OF THE "PROLETARIAT"

In view of the magnificent success of the new capitalism, as it may be observed in the United

States, must we admit that the problem of the "proletariat," which was ignored by the old liberalism and wrongly interpreted by socialism, has lost its significance? This would be as much as admitting that the value of a civilization is measured purely by its economic success, and that a certain degree of material improvement for the collective type is worth more than all the moral virtues that the individual type could muster in the past.

It is plain enough that the trend of the new dynamic capitalism is logically toward a kind of collectivism, the only collectivism which is really feasible under present conditions of human economics. The trend of customs and morals leads to the same end. Moreover, the whole preponderant tendency toward collectivism results primarily from certain conditions of life and work rather than from any program, or preference for it. Take a dozen peasants from their farms and transplant them to the workers' quarter of a great city: the various shades of their personalities will almost immediately give way to mass tendencies. On the other hand, take as many workingmen from the city and give them parcels of land: their first ges-

ture will be to plant hedges and set up fences. . . .

The old idea of the proletariat as a class of poor people opposed to the rich, is obviated by the capitalism of dynamic wealth, since wealth exists only in so far as it circulates among all, and all in turn aid and hasten its movement. But the terrible truth is that at the same time each and all—owners, engineers, employees, common laborers, all who are simultaneously producers and consumers—are become slaves, that is to say "proletarians," bowing before *the merciless law of economic return!*

Here, then, is the definition of "proletariat": *it is all humanity subjecting itself to matter or the machine; no longer dominant, but yielding passively in its ways of living, its tastes, its ideas, to the absolute empire of a purely material or mechanical evolution.*

Is not the fact that humanity, rightly or wrongly, finds happiness in this mode of life, the most important consideration after all? If the proletariat of matter and the slaves of the machine did not derive sufficient compensation from it all, would they submit to it?

We have no objections to this view, provided

that man does not come to such a pass that all his ideas, his aspirations and his very pleasures fall under the iron rule of matter and the machine. Matter has no consciousness whatsoever. And it is clear that if man renounced his freedom of will, all civilization would be at the mercy of physical accidents.

V. WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

Outside of so-called deeds of heroism or spontaneous actions inspired by religious faith, it is true that man takes action only to achieve happiness for himself and avoid misery. It would be impossible to touch on any of the fundamental problems of civilization without considering from some aspect or other the philosophy of human happiness.

Humanity following now the path of those satisfactions that the applied sciences offer inclines more and more to a materialistic conception of happiness. In the life of the crowds this notion is reflected almost completely by the quest of physical comfort. The very type of well-being or comfort is becoming uniform: it is represented by certain living-comforts that correspond to the program of mechanical science. Once a man

could find pleasure in the repose which the country afforded, another in conversation about a table, another in a game of bowling or in gardening. To-day, for hundreds of millions of persons, the matter of well-being has become exactly the same: to have a radio, to drive an automobile, to go to the cinema. Even sentimental pleasures are giving way to mechanical ones.

Now as the field of pleasure becomes more uniform, it becomes more limited, more dependent on mechanical arts, and it begins to seem more sterile. For happiness can only remain fresh and varied, can only spread, by virtue of the differences, the variety in temperaments and intellectual or moral aspirations. Uniformity of taste and obsession with the mechanical lead people back to an infantile and passive, or essentially "proletarian" conception of happiness.

Even if this conception embrace the whole gamut of physical joys and material pleasures, it remains limited. The truth of this was demonstrated by Lucullus a long time ago. Man may improve the quality of his food considerably: he can never increase the number of meals and the amount of nourishment that his body can absorb

each day. He may increase the comforts of his bedchamber; but he will never be able to sleep, wide-awake. He may devise new ways of traveling; but he can never banish fatigue. He may seek to refine, pervert or distort the sex instinct; but he will never be able to avoid lassitude. At the dead limits of physical enjoyment, man encounters disillusionment. One thinks of the little girl, who getting out of the family automobile cried longingly: "Oh, papa, please let me ride in that trolley-car."

Material pleasure represents rather a want satisfied or a privation banished, than some real improvement in the state of things. It does away for the moment with effort, hunger, desire, but it neither enriches nor strengthens man in the positive sense; on the contrary, it tends more often to weaken him. It is for this reason that we observe so frequently the frightful boredom and the kind of madness that overtakes men who are laden with wealth, but have neither intellectual nor moral resources to sustain them.

When the very memory of dire privation has disappeared, and the saturation-point of comfort has been reached, then the crowds will have to create another idea, or if there is none to be found,

destroy its own playthings, like children, in order to have something new. . . .

Here we feel keenly the frailty of civilizations which are too materialistic. On many occasions in history we have seen people attain a level of comfort that excluded all hardship or privation, at least for many of the citizens. But then, these transient periods of widespread luxury seem brief and evanescent visions in the great march of the centuries with their long tale of labor and woe.

The frailty of materialistic civilizations proceeds from causes which are as old as the hills. Little by little, the satisfaction of all the appetites weakens the physical and intellectual springs of man: soon he is consuming more than he can produce, and so falls into a state of dependence on other and ruder men, against whom he is in the end left defenseless. A danger from without fanned by a weakness within. The habit of physical pleasure detaches man from the varieties of spiritual consolation: in the event of misfortunes, emergencies, cataclysms, he finds himself morally disarmed. And as soon as some influence contributes to lowering the level of their prosperity, pleasure-loving people always turn in revolt at their circumstances, only

to collapse thereafter into social disorder. In the last place, the general accession to a state of satisfied plenty robs the race of all that might spur it on to new and more fertile inventions.

On the whole, gratification spells weakness. Now the state of the world is always determined by the balancing of positive forces, by the strivings of physical or moral energies.

A profound and lasting happiness does not consist of pleasure; it consists of being strong, of being able to invent, construct, fecundate, conquer matter; it consists of consciously directing one's own energies and those of others, of learning and inspiring others to the superior qualities of the human race. Every civilization that has no object other than to assure men of prosperity is doomed to decay. Every civilization, on the other hand, which arouses man to the utmost exertions by increasing man's consciousness of himself, is lasting and sovereign.

Thus we are led to consider the masses that compose the modern world, no longer in the light only of their output of prosperity, but in the light of their development of new funds of energy and their preservation of old ones. To "deproletarize"

the masses means no doubt to guarantee each individual the minimum physical dignity and comfort consonant with moral dignity. But it would mean above all to make man, in the face of matter, master of his own consciousness: for one thing, to arm him so that he can defend himself, so that he is free to work and develop his faculties in this transformed universe where he is called to live: for another, to preserve or nourish in him, beyond the merely material considerations, certain virtues, for want of which he will never be other than a "proletarian"—slave of his age, instead of master of it.

The very statement of this problem leads us to define our position from two angles: the modern and conservative attitudes.

VI. MODERN POSITIONS

First, the new attitudes.

Man's conquest of nature during the last century makes a superb, a magnificent epic. When we reflect on this we have a dangerous tendency to be unduly proud of our achievements, which might conceivably lead us to foolish indulgences or to a state of beatific inertia. But let us for the

sake of argument, take an optimistic attitude toward all the advantages that human effort may derive from this state of things.

Man's field of vision and knowledge has been enlarged veritably to the limits of the actual universe. There is no more land to be discovered, no more territory that is impenetrable. It would be unjust not to face this fact, or to deprive anybody of whatever room it may leave for the free play of his energies; or through prejudice, or self-interest, confine him within artificial walls.

Every child to-day has the right to know that the universe belongs to him, if he is willing to take the trouble to understand it and trace his way through it.

The mark of the slave is his chain. The most characteristic mark of the proletarian is his inability to detach himself—save at the utmost risk to himself—from certain imposed conditions of existence and work that hinder the free play of his inclinations.

If we are bound to give everyone some knowledge of his chances in this universe, we are no less bound to assure him of the actual freedom to grasp these opportunities. The first requisite for

the improvement of man's state is that he escape from brutal restraints, from a herd-life, from the debasing set of rules and classifications that divide human beings into pariahs and privileged classes. This is something altogether different from the theoretical and always more or less illusory claims for political liberty.

The great question really is how to prevent dangers of oppression engendered by competition within and between masses, in the name of material progress. Every workingman, like every professional man, like every farmer, should be free to go where he wishes, or seek his fortune wherever or however it pleases him, so long as he does not run counter to the public peace and health. In this way we should be doing away with the abuses of a constricting nationalism, as of a Malthusian syndicalism, and an ethnic protection. Under various pretexts, sometimes skillfully concealed, these violations of liberty manage to exclude only certain kinds of men, to the advantage of others, from the development of their inclinations and energies.

But once the human being is placed in the position of competing in a field of action that extends throughout the universe, he must be armed for it.

Men must be armed and women too. In the vast promiscuity of crowds to-day, where all breeds and all races are mixed, with their passions, their violence, their avidity, their sores, it would be madness to turn loose the boys and girls, who are the children of the people, with a prize for their "good behavior" and a parcel of illusions as their sole protection. Modern civilization results from circumstances and involves dangers that no one alone can alter. The most pressing need is not to go on groaning about them, but to adapt our systems of education to them.

On the other hand, any attempts at "deproletarizing" the masses will be valueless unless they are based upon instruction which emphasizes the sciences and technical crafts. The advance of the mechanical arts nowadays determines, to no small degree, what the distribution of labor and of wealth among groups of human beings shall be. Only a casual scrutiny of conditions within the economic mass is enough to reveal that the unskilled laborer, wanting in scientific knowledge, is a passive thing. His labor is subject to the same accidents and fluctuations as the price of goods. Whatever he may do, he remains condemned, by

the very nature of his rôle, to suffer periods of unemployment, because unlike the technician or the skilled craftsman, he cannot perfect his instruments; nor can he change the nature of his activity in order to escape competition or periodic depressions. The so-called "social struggles" will be banished only through the disappearance of these hordes of unskilled laborers, who are wanting in invention and enterprise, who are swept along or battered about by economic cycles, who are unable to, or unwilling to foresee the future, and whose single answer to misfortune and misery is the gesture of bloody revolt.

To "deproletarize" the masses, that is, to liberate individuals from a blind passiveness and nourish in them the ambition to fulfill their highest destiny, the children of the people must also be taught economic foresight. Our rural and sedentary grandfathers learned the secrets of the seasons, the vagaries of the wind, the influence of the moon. And to-day one of the most serious apparent weaknesses of the proletariat is that living as they do among forces they do not comprehend, its members seem to show repugnance to understanding them or looking ahead. They believe that the fac-

tory in which they are employed functions automatically, that prosperity follows a continuous curve, and that the advance in material comfort is eternal and predestined. In this respect, the tendencies of the most modern form of capitalism, as of old-fashioned socialism, are most dangerous. It starts with the same illusion: that the volume of production and consumption can always be kept balancing each other. But, in reality, a continued economic balance is maintained only through the persistent improvement in *quality*. The consuming markets are always capable of absorbing a greater volume of products, provided that they are *better and cheaper*. They will not and cannot go on absorbing an unlimited volume of products of the same type or quality and of the same cost. This is the principal error of the American system; and it is on account of this that America is beginning to feel the pinch.

It is most important, then, that man be not stupefied by the whirling of the machine, nor intoxicated by the dizzy rhythms of automatic production: plethora, then economic asphyxiation, and finally unemployment and poverty, may be the consequences of such a state. The people that

will be most certain of their future will be those who, availing themselves dexterously of the machine, never forget, all the while, that so far as production is concerned, nothing is more vital than eternal flexibility, ingenuity, and inventiveness.

The qualities of flexibility and invention would indicate that man must remain master of the machines he has built up, free to do without them or change them at will. The routine of mechanism is no less demoralizing than all other routines. It benumbs the mind and depraves the body.

Man, to-day, is in a position to spare himself a great deal of bodily fatigue and discover many new sources of pleasure. But here again lack of education results in an inertia or passiveness which holds the masses in a "proletarian" state. Modern labor is specialized labor. Trained effort is exacted of the individual, more or less difficult, but always uniform, taking the same direction, going through the same motions, and covering a very narrow scope. The human body is coming to have only a few active parts,—sometimes only a single limb!—those generally that correspond to the professional motion required. The rest of the body is offered up in sacrifice! The highly technical specialization of

labor tends to produce unbalanced personalities which know how to react only in contact with a machine or a tool, and which, subjected to other kinds of conditions, remain inert, unarmed against weakness, vice, disease. This development, aside from the fact that it gradually lowers the quality of the human type—for instance, the physical equipment of a son of peasants, due to his complex trade, is incomparably better than that of a son of laborers whose effort is wholly specialized—this new development, then, offers the most ominous consequences for the social order. For example, the workingman loses all awareness of his veritable needs. He is only interested in the amount of money he has gained, which will permit him, when the day's work is over, to play passively. He loses interest both in his home and even in his health. He thinks of repose only as distraction, no longer as solace, or inner comfort.

And it can scarcely be emphasized that the human being will not drop his passive attitude, his "proletarian" state of mind, except in so far as his stability and security are assured.

Through sports, through the scientific organizing of leisure time, modern life offers the individual

many means of escaping from the physical hazards of too great specialization. But we must go much farther in this direction. We must train the child to develop his body, to undergo a general mental and physical culture, to consider indispensable such hygienic conditions as laboring classes in many lands have never heard of as yet. The desire for health and for physical well-being must be awakened in human beings at an early age. By such means more vices can be overcome than by all the sermons and prohibitions. Instinctively, popular demands will direct themselves toward more deeply useful considerations than simply higher wages and less work. The laborer will know how to use his money. . . .

VII. CONSERVATIVE POSITIONS

To "deproletarize" the masses, means in the first place to render to man control over his own person, over his way of living, feeling, and taking action, in face of the present requirements of matter and the entanglements of the machine. To this end we must educate man and prepare him to deal with all the actual conditions, even the most recent ones, of the *milieu* in which he will pass his life.

But the cultivation of an active personality cannot be attained without a deeper culture, that of the thinking and moral person. When all is said and done, this deeper culture will prove to be the decisive factor in the play of forces that strive for the mastery of the world. Intellectual and emotional depths are the elements that always enable men to hold fast in the face of adversity, or to survive in the face of new circumstances that could not be foreseen. For it is only too certain that technical education and physical training, alone, are not enough to fortify character. The ability to resist and the chances of enduring longest inevitably belong to the people that have great moral resources. Such people also generally enjoy two great advantages which may often aid in overcoming adverse conditions: that of influence over others and that of a certain disinterestedness.

The vast majority of men to-day take up commercial careers, and devote themselves to the pursuit of gain. Commerce, to be sure, has been the hand-maiden of progress throughout the ages. But in itself it is neither an educative nor moral force. It presupposes a constant battle of shrewd or tricky minds seeking to wrest profits from others. Thus

every person comes to look upon his neighbor as his ultimate prey. Business, setting man against man, as it does, is greatly inferior to the professions which throw men into conflict with nature. Witness the difference in "mental make-up" between an engineer and a merchant.

This is an important reflection which dispels all hope of a purely economic or business civilization having in itself the moral resources equal to long resistance and duration.

Human societies, whatever species they may belong to, whether of primitive or cultured type, must have an ideal of behavior and an objective way of thinking, to guarantee their holding together: else, ties are easily dissolved, and the society eventually disappears. Similarly, the individual only perceives that his dignity is at stake, or will only defend it, when he is conscious of his own rôle in society, that is of a duty beyond the immediate fluctuations of his self-interest. When he is motivated only by selfishness he will yield neither to group interests nor to those higher necessities that would best assure him of ultimate prosperity and stability. The most materialistic philosophy cannot do without some detachment of spirit or foresight,

in order to give impulse at least to the activities of a speculative scientist. In reality, nothing new is ever accomplished, nothing nobler, nothing is ever produced or sustained, except through some inner urge of the human being that extends beyond the narrow interests of every-day.

Here we arrive at the *conservative positions*, which must be defended at all costs.

The first of these considerations is the *supremacy of the mind*.

So far as this is concerned we find that the trend of capitalism is scarcely less dangerous than that of socialism. The older forms of socialism used to give a primary place in society to the forms of labor which filled the most elementary and tangible needs. For the socialists, the "worker" was simply the manual laborer. This is the notion which the Russians clung to and tried to carry out.

The new and much more enlightened capitalism, as we have seen for instance in the United States, does not make the error of opposing manual labor to intellectual labor. But it does have a marked tendency to discourage disinterested and speculative thinking. It reserves its highest rewards for

those human activities which are most purely materialistic and utilitarian. It tolerates and encourages the sciences, the arts, moral and religious reflection, only with the purpose of domesticating them.

If this tendency should become widespread and systematic, it would sooner or later, through various stages, bring civilization to the verge of such disasters as Bolshevism experienced. We would suffer a three-fold decline: material, moral, and social.

Let us first consider the material side. The applied sciences may only exist and make progress under the leadership of pure science. The advance in practical knowledge postulates a corresponding and prior advance in theoretical knowledge which is only possible through the kind of thought that has detached itself from all mercenary or practical considerations. The knowledge of the engineer is based on the previous speculations of the pure physicist, on the experiments of the chemist, the field-work of the geologist.

The same conditions hold for problems of a moral and social order. No practical occupation involves or is truly concerned with any moral end, nor for that matter any ultimate objective beyond

its own satisfaction. Closely studied, the *pragmatism* and the money-making spirit of America seems to make up a vicious circle, without issue, without perspective or horizon: the forces in play have, it is true, an amazing vigor, so long as they employ the ideals and strictures of the old religions; but in themselves they imply neither solidity nor duration.

The second position that must be defended at all costs is that of the *family*. Like the preceding one (of *mind*), it is dangerously assailed both by socialism and certain forms of capitalism. Both factions refuse to recognize man as anything other than an "economic agent," designed purely to produce, consume, and increase the prosperity of the mass—and thus, detached from his former sentimental and family ties. But every work of idealism, every example of heroism, every great and vital gesture that has ever been made presupposes some emotional, some dramatically human choice. To destroy these ruling qualities in men were to unbend the great mainsprings in them, to take away the very taste for life! This will never come about, of course: there would merely be a replacement of ordered sentiments by anarchic passions. For the

rest, only tradition fortifies character in individuals and fixes them within the continuity of collective ambitions. And no traditions can survive without the family.

Civilizations which are too materialistic are cruel to the old, detest the dead, and bear no children: *the same egoism that breaks with the past, breaks with the future.*

The third position to be defended against the inroads of the economic masses is precisely that of *humanity,* or as our ancestors used to say, of humanism. The laws of mechanism, the worry about earning more profits, and using less time, tends to alter our manners and morals so that respect, sympathy, or mere politeness to others vanish, little by little. How can one speak or think in terms of friendship, kindness, or courtesy with automatons or "obsessed" people? The iron brutality of machines that order human movements have no purpose other than to fulfill the cold-blooded contracts that determine affairs of money. Thus men are only drawn together nowadays by material necessity, or by motives of profit. Thus vanish also those sterling social virtues which were the great boon of society. Personality is reduced to

mathematical, mechanical, or judicial functions. It is as much as to say that civilization as it becomes wholly utilitarian loses all its delights, and, consequently, its deeper utility. It becomes nothing but a police system engaged in supervising narrow and mundane forms of activity.

Now a group that is so composed that at heart it lacks humanity, charity, friendship, or even team-spirit, may remain united for a certain length of time in order to exploit natural resources or engage in profitable undertakings together. But it will not be able to resist the pressure or onslaught of other groups which, in addition to having technical power, possess also that spirit of solidarity and that splendid superiority that the love of one's neighbor gives to man.

The present cycle of human evolution, based as it is on the advance of the applied sciences, on economic interaction and on the stern discipline demanded by adherence to machines, tends gradually toward the "depersonalization" of the individual, who will perhaps become a machine himself. That is the true sense, the actual meaning of the word "proletariat."

The problem of the "proletariat"—the most oppressive problem of modern civilization—consists of mastering the power of the machine without sacrificing the human identity of man. Neither the march of mechanism nor the transformations which it bespeaks for the whole world should be impeded. But mechanism, left to itself, uncontrolled by the eternal laws of man's supremacy above matter, which are the laws of the mind, the family, and charity, such a mechanism will grant the race only an illusory and fleeting power. The master of the world will be the "civilized" man, who knows how to employ the machine to his own ends, and not the "proletarian" seeking within the machine the secret of civilization.

With these considerations in mind, the issue of the contest is still open either to Europe or America.

It will be decided and won by the mother of the family and the school. The future belongs to the best school and the best family, which will be capable, despite the machine, of furnishing human energy with a purpose and a justification other than that merely of eating and drinking.